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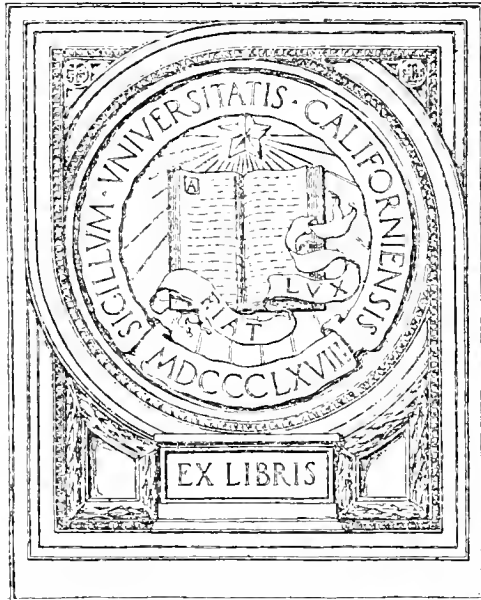
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FLOOD IN THE OJIRA GORGE (p. 18).

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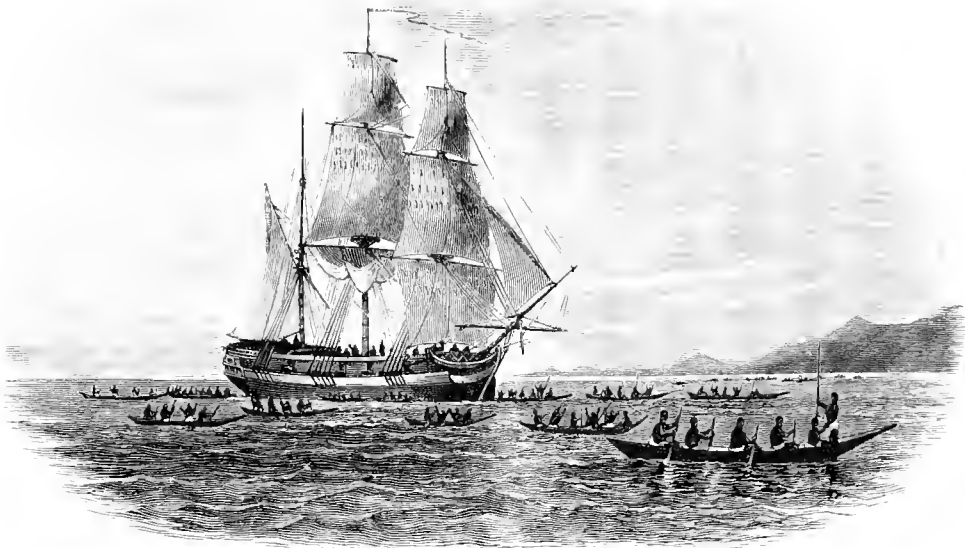
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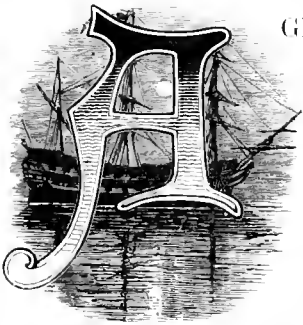


THE ENDEAVOUR APPROACHING OTAHEITE.

CASSELL'S PICTURESQUE AUSTRALASIA.

EXPLORERS BY SEA.

Early Maps—The Dutch Explorers—Tasman—William Dampier—Captain Cook—First Voyage—New Zealand—The Maoris—Queen Charlotte's Sound—Botany Bay—The Endeavour River—The Second Voyage—A Maori Attack—The Third and Last Voyage—Settlement of Convicts at Sydney—French and English—Matthew Flinders and George Bass—The *Tom Thumb*—Southward Ho!—The *Investigator*—Monotonous Voyages—The Inland Sea—Grant—The Gulf of Carpentaria—*Investigator* Tree—Wrecked and Abandoned—Captain King—The *Beagle*—Charles Darwin.



A GREAT addition was made in 1885 to our knowledge of the ideas of the early inhabitants of Australasia with respect to the part of the world in which they lived. In that year there were published, at the expense of the Public Libraries of Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney, reproductions of four ancient maps in the British Museum. The earliest of these seems to have been made in the time of Francis I. of France, for the use of his son, the Dauphin, afterwards Henry II., its probable date being between 1530 and 1536. The names are all in French,

though there are traces of translation from the Portuguese. At the south of Java, and separated from it only by a very narrow channel, more like a river than a strait, is an enormous island, too big to be wholly included in the map, called Jave la Grande.

It has been remarked by a French geographer of repute that on the Eastern coast the name Côte des Herbagés occurs, a name which suggests the much later Botany Bay. It need hardly be said that the exact position does not correspond. The interior of the island continent is filled up with fancy pictures which suggest a rather advanced stage of civilisation for the inhabitants. An inspection of all the four maps makes it very clear that early map-makers drew largely on their imaginations. In the second map, which was drawn by a Frenchman in 1550, the name Australia appears for the first time; but La Terre Australle, the Southern Land, is made to stretch right along the bottom of the map below Africa and also below South America, from which it is separated by the very narrow Straits of Magellan. This land is provided with rivers flowing northward at convenient distances, and on the east includes the Great Java of the earlier map.

Numerous are the claims laid to the first discovery of Australia. The Spaniards, the Portuguese, and the Dutch, the three great seafaring nations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, have all maintained that the honour is theirs. But it is now generally believed, though it may not admit of absolute proof, that the discovery was made by the Portuguese prior to the year 1540, but all record of the circumstance has been lost. The Spaniards, too, had been on the coast as early as the beginning of the seventeenth century, and Torres Strait, so called after a Spanish admiral, is now a name well known all over the world.

At a very early period the Dutch, sailing across the Indian Ocean to their possessions in the East Indies, had come upon the north-western coast, and have left traces of their presence in the Dutch names so common there; but the land is barren, desolate, and uninhabited even now, so it is little wonder they found no inducement to settle there. Sometimes, too, the Dutch discovered Australia in dismal fashion by finding her shores beneath their keel. The long and sorrowful record of wrecks on the cruel Australian coast was begun in 1629, when a great Dutch East Indiaman, named the *Batavia*, was cast away on some islands off the coast of Western Australia. Some of the survivors reached Batavia, but their sufferings were terrible; and the Dutch, contrary to their usual custom, allowed the narrative of this disastrous voyage to be published, thinking, doubtless, that a land so desolate and barren could be of little use to any nation. Long before the wreck of the *Batavia*, many Dutch ships had been on the coast of Australia, both in the north and in the west, but the greatest of Dutch explorers, and the one of whom we know most, was Abel Jansen Tasman, who in 1642 set out from Batavia to circumnavigate New Holland, as Australia was once called. This he did, although he kept so far out to sea that he saw no portion of Australia itself. He touched the island now called after him, but which he named, after the Governor-General of Batavia, Van Diemen's Land. Tasman landed at a place he called Fredrick Hendrik's Bay, and though he met no inhabitants, he found such traces of them as decided the timid and cautious Dutchmen to keep out of their way. They saw steps, he says, cut in the trees at a distance of five feet from one another, and so concluded the people must be of prodigious size. They saw, too, the marks of a wild beast's feet in the sand, resembling those of a tiger. The fertility of the land, and the height and size of the gum-trees, excited their admiration. They decided, however, not to provoke the

giants to wrath, but to sail away from their country and seek the Solomon Islands. While in search of these islands, Tasman came upon a high and mountainous land in the south-east, which he called Staaten Land, the present New Zealand. He both saw and held communication with the natives, whom he accurately describes, but he never attempted to land, having found in the Maori, what he feared in the Tasmanian, a fierce and warlike savage. He sailed up the western coast of the Northern Island, and then away north, without attempting to ascertain whether this land he had discovered was an island or a continent. The cape at the extreme north-west he called Maria Van Diemen, after the daughter of the Governor-General for whose glory he seems always more careful than for his own.

The Dutch appear to have been pleased with their explorer, and truly it was little wonder, for he had sailed over thousands of miles of dreary ocean, where a sail had never been seen before; and if he had found no opening for that fresh trade which the mercantile soul of the Dutchman ardently desired, he had at least circumnavigated and given some dim notions of the outline of that Great South Land which had been for so many years a subject of wonder and speculation. But the veil of mystery was not destined to be lifted for many, many years. Tasman himself made another voyage of discovery along the north-west coast of Australia, and after him came other explorers; but the Dutch at that time were so fearful lest another nation should step in and profit by their discoveries that little beyond the bare names of the ships was recorded, and no account whatever of their voyages has been found. Tasman's chart was published, and his track was shown on the floor of the Town Hall, Amsterdam. The coast of Western Australia remained a terror to the Dutch navigators sailing from the Cape to the East Indies, and we have accounts—meagre, it is true—not only of many wrecks, but of several expeditions that were sent out in search of survivors. Probably we owe even this scant information to the fact that further exploration only confirmed the first opinion, that the coast was barren and miserable, and quite unfitted for colonisation.

It was about the end of the seventeenth century, in 1696 or 1697, that Willem Vlamingh, while seeking the crew of some wrecked vessel, discovered the Swan River, and also what seems to have been considered far more important, that *rara avis*, as the ancients called it, the black swan, from which the river received its name. He also found on the coast a plate and inscription, which had been placed there by the earlier Dutch discoverer, Dirk Hartog—whose real name was Theodoric, generally shortened into Dirk—as early as 1616. Vlamingh followed his example, and left a tin plate of his own. Both the plates were seen by the captain of the French ship, *Naturaliste*, in 1801, more than a century after. When, however, the coast was again revisited in 1838, both had disappeared. What would our museums give for these plates now!

Only one Englishman is known to have visited these shores before Captain Cook, namely, the buccaneer, William Dampier, who, accompanied by a crew of pirates and cutthroats, fell in with the north-west coast about Cape Lévêque, and ran down the coast of the part that is now known by his name. This was in 1688, and he only stayed twelve days; but, though his stay was so short, his descriptions are peculiarly

graphic and interesting, and the country at the present day is as barren and desolate, the aborigines as savage and brutal, as Dampier found them 200 years ago. "The inhabitants," he says, "are the most miserable wretches in the universe, having no houses, no garments save a piece of the bark of a tree tied like a girdle round the waist: no sheep, poultry, or fruit, but feed upon a few fish, cockles, mussels, or periwinkles. They are without religion or government, . . . and, setting aside their human shape, they differ but little from brutes. They are tall, straight-bodied, and thin, with small, long limbs. . . . The colour of their skin, both of their faces and the rest of their bodies, is coal-black, like that of the negroes of Guinea. They live in companies, twenty or thirty men, women, and children together." He goes on to say that this



THE ISLAND OF OTAHEITE.

(From a Painting by Wm. Hodges, who accompanied Capt. Cook.)

wretched people caught fish by making stone weirs across small coves or branches of the sea, and he is of opinion that this must have been their only means of sustenance; for, says he, "they must attend the weirs, or they must fast, for the earth affords them no food at all. There is neither herb, root, pulse, nor any sort of grain that we saw, nor any bird or beast that they could catch, having no instruments for it." Perhaps the blackfellow is hardly as helpless as Dampier thought him, but, on the whole, these descriptions are very accurate, and might have been written by an explorer at the present day. He made another voyage to Australia in 1699, this time sent out by the English Government, and came upon the coast about Shark Bay. It was the spring of the year, and the multitude of bright plumaged birds, the beauty of the numberless flowers, and the peculiar aromatic fragrance of the Australian bush, astonished and delighted the voyagers: but the aborigines were no improvement on their brethren five hundred miles further north. The coast was barren, and the land poor and sandy, and Dampier remarks that, except for the pleasure of discovering the barrenest spot on the face of the globe, this coast of New Holland would not have charmed him much.

Eighty years now elapse before Australia is heard of again. This, its real discovery, seems to take place almost by accident. In 1769 a transit of Venus was to occur, which could only be observed from one of the islands in the South Seas; and, in order that this might be done, Captain James Cook was sent out in the ship *Endeavour*, with orders that, after the primary object of the voyage had been accomplished, he was to



CAPTAIN COOK.

(From the Original Portrait by Dance in the Gallery of Greenwich Hospital.)

make more extensive research among the islands of the South Seas, and, if possible, to follow up Tasman's discoveries and ascertain something more of the little known Australian continent.

Captain Cook sailed from England in August, 1768, and reached Otaheite in the April of the following year. The transit of Venus having been successfully observed, he sailed down south into unknown seas, and, after a six weeks' voyage, fell in with land which at first he took for the Terra Australis Incognita, but which was in reality the North Island of New Zealand, just about the part now known as Poverty Bay.

The first appearance of the country was very striking. As they sailed into the bay, the voyagers saw range after range of pine-clad hills rising one above the other, and behind all a chain of mountains, which appeared to rise to an enormous height. As they came closer in shore, they saw among the densely-wooded hills many signs of human habitation, and soon houses, small but neat, were seen peeping out from among the foliage, and the top of one of the high cliffs which bounded the bay was crowned with a Maori "pahi," or fortification, which was the subject of much discussion among the strangers. That the land was thickly populated was evident, for the natives crowded down to the beach to obtain a closer view of the strange ship that had come to their shores. They were reckless and daring to a surpassing degree, for, on the Englishmen attempting to land, these natives, who seemed to know no fear, vigorously opposed them, and boldly faced the well-armed strangers, although they had only their battle-axes and "merais." It was impossible to come to an amicable understanding, and before the retreat to the ship could be effected, one of these courageous natives had to be shot. Next day Cook discovered that a South Sea Islander he had with him could make himself understood, and accordingly he explained through him that their errand was one of peace. Little was gained by this, however, for, though the natives approached and chatted in friendly fashion, they, like true savages, stole whatever they could lay their hands upon, showing themselves as thievish as they were brave. "Finally," says the chronicler, "they were driven away by a discharge of small shot."

Failing to establish friendly relations in Poverty Bay, Cook sailed south along the coast, naming the various bays and headlands as he passed. Ever and anon the natives came out in their canoes and boldly defied the strangers, scarcely heeding, if indeed they understood, the South Sea Islander's declarations that the white men had weapons like thunder and lightning, and could tear their canoes to atoms. On one occasion a four-pounder loaded with grape-shot was fired, and for a moment the roar and flash completely overawed the natives, who then consented to come alongside and trade; but it was discovered that they entertained very one-sided notions as to a bargain, for though they received gladly the white men's gifts, it was as gifts, and they absolutely refused to make any return.

After sailing south till he reached a high headland, which is still known by his name of Cape Turnagain, Cook veered round, and sailed up the coast once more. On his return voyage he found the natives much more inclined to be friendly, coming off of their own accord in their canoes, and not only trading, but even staying all night on board the *Endeavour*, while at Tolega Bay the Englishmen actually ventured ashore, and even entered the huts of the New Zealanders, and observed them at their meals. These huts, Cook says, were of slight construction, but clean and neat; and the meals of the inhabitants, as a rule, consisted of fish and the fibrous roots of the fern, which were bruised and roasted. There was no wild animal in the country larger than a rat, they were told, and though they saw some dogs, these were kept as domestic animals, and used for food. There seems great probability that the now extinct "moa" was then in existence, for some of the "patus"—a kind of battle-axe, or, more correctly speaking, war-club—presented to Cook by the chiefs, and now

in the British Museum, were adorned with tufts of the feathers of this bird, showing how recent must have been its extinction.

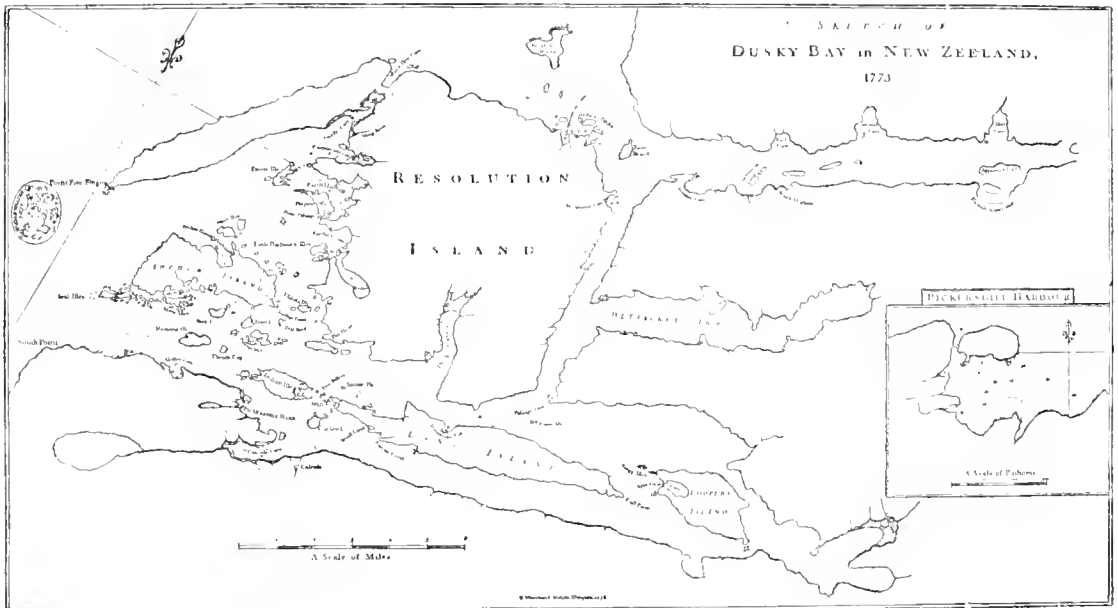
These Maoris were far removed from the savages whom the voyagers afterwards met in Australia and Van Diemen's Land, for Cook mentions that they had large enclosures neatly fenced with reeds, and planted with yams, sweet potatoes, and other edible plants; while, if the deeply tattooed faces of the warriors astonished and slightly horrified the explorers, their graceful canoes and handsome "whares" excited their wonder and admiration. The New Zealander was and is a true artist. In those days his only tool was a sharp stone, and yet every implement, canoe, weapon, or house was cleverly ornamented with intricate patterns and grotesque faces; and so artistic was this carving that the discoverers doubted, what has since been proved, that the Maoris had no other tools at their command but what were shown to them. As there were no animals on the islands, their dress, a sort of petticoat of native cloth, was made from the New Zealand flax, while a coarser kind of cloth served them for cloaks. Occasionally some great chief had his cloak bordered with strips of dog or rat skin, but this latter animal was very rare.

Thus Cook sailed up the coast, sometimes fighting, sometimes trading peaceably with the natives — everywhere were villages, and everywhere the land appeared populous, rich, and fertile; but not until he reached the very northernmost point, Tasman's Cape Maria Van Diemen, does it seem to have struck him that this beautiful land was not the Terra Australis he was in search of, but the Staaten Land of the old Dutch voyager. After rounding the Cape, he sailed down the north-west coast of the Northern Island, and at last, without discovering the straits between them, came to anchor in Queen Charlotte's Sound, to the north of the South Island. Here he hoisted the Union Jack, and took formal possession of this new land in the name of King George III. Here, too, for the first time the Englishmen saw, to their horror, undoubted evidences of cannibalism. The Maoris did not attempt to conceal the fact, but declared that they only ate their enemies. Mighty battles must then have taken place, and these cannibal feasts were evidently of not infrequent occurrence, for even to this day great heaps of charred human bones are to be found, ghastly relics of bygone orgies.

Cook found the scrub about Queen Charlotte's Sound so dense and thick that it was well-nigh impenetrable, and it was only with great difficulty that he managed to ascend a high hill, which gave him some out-look over the sea. From this hill he saw enough to convince him they were on the shores of a strait separating the Northern from the Southern, or, as many call it, the Middle Island of New Zealand. His companions, however, were not so certain; therefore, to decide the matter, he sailed out of the harbour through the straits which bear his name, and along the coast of the Northern Island, till he reached Cape Turnagain, when the doubters were more than satisfied. Thence he turned south, and explored the coast of the Southern Island, sailing right round Stewart Island, and up the western coast till he reached Cape Farewell, so named because there, on the 31st of March, 1770, he left New Zealand, and turned west, in search of the unknown New Holland.

Nineteen days' sailing brought them to the coast of Gippsland, at a place seldom

now laid down on any map, but which Cook called Point Hicks, in honour of his senior lieutenant, who first sighted land. This, his first view of Australia, appears to have delighted Captain Cook greatly. "It had," he says, "a very pleasing appearance. It is of moderate height, diversified by hills and valleys, ridges and plains, interspersed with a few lawns of no great extent, but in general covered with wood. The ascent of the hills and ridges is gentle, and the summits are not high." Very different that from the descriptions of the earlier mariners; and, as they sailed on northwards, his hopes grew higher still. The mountains became higher and steeper, and the dryness of the atmosphere gave them that deep blue tint which makes Australian mountains like none others in the world, and which gives to Australian scenery a subtle charm of its



REDUCED FAC-SIMILE OF A CHART PREPARED BY WM. HODGES DURING THE VOYAGE.

own. The forest stretched out before them dense and close, one rolling sea of dark, almost black foliage, while at the water's edge the steep, stern cliffs, against which the surf beat continually, barred their entrance to this land of promise.

The first place at which Cook was able to effect a landing was Botany Bay, so called from the numberless new plants found there by the botanists of the expedition. It was a new land, and everything was different from the far-off English home, from the stars overhead to the grass underfoot. Numerous inhabitants were seen, but at first, with the apathy of the true Australian blackfellow, the savages went on with their ordinary occupations, and took no notice of the strange ship that had sailed into the bay. When the white men attempted to land, however, matters assumed a different aspect, and they were valiantly opposed by two stark-naked warriors, ghastly in their war-paint of white pipeclay, which was smeared over them in such fashion that they looked remarkably like skeletons. They were armed only with spears, "woomeras," and

what Cook calls scimitars, but which are evidently boomerangs. Bravely they stood their ground, flinging spears where the Englishmen stood thickest. A musket fired between them daunted them for a moment, but they rallied, until a charge of small shot fired into the legs of one of them put them to flight.

Nothing would afterwards prevail on any of the blackfellows to come and trade with the invaders. They fled at the first approach, and the presents which the white men left about their deserted "mia-mias" were never even touched.

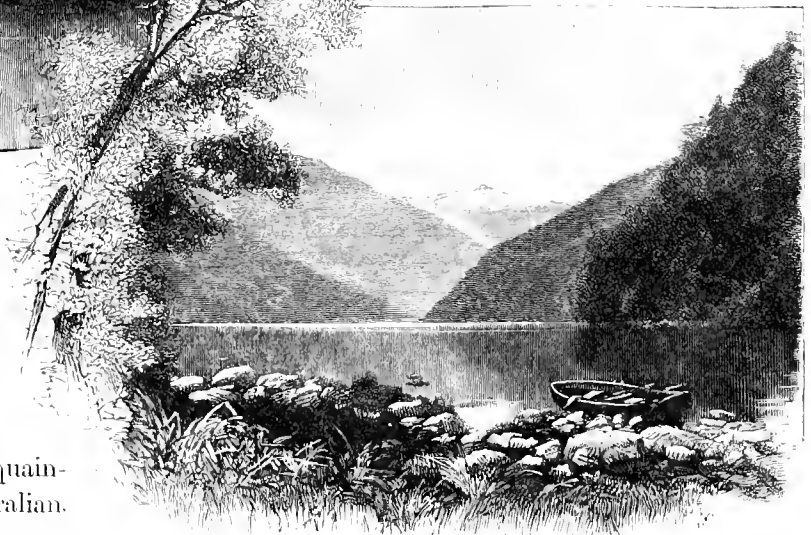
The rest of Cook's famous voyage, though important on account of the fresh discoveries made daily, is monotonous to the reader from the sameness of these discoveries. He sailed up the



ACHERON PASSAGE,
DUSKY SOUND.

coast, naming the various bays and headlands as he passed. Occasionally he cast anchor, and the voyagers went ashore and made acquaintance with things Australian. For the first time they saw the dingo and the kangaroo,

and myriads of birds—black swans, black and white cockatoos, sable crows, and parrots of every size and hue; snakes of every description; scorpions, and the countless insect life of Australia. On one occasion the old *Endeavour* bumped heavily on a reef, and was only saved from instant destruction by the fact that a piece of rock had broken off and stuck fast in the hole it had made. Cook was obliged to beach the vessel and take out her stores, in order to repair her. These repairs of course took some time, and the crew amused their leisure by endeavouring to enter into friendly relations with the blackfellows, who were pretty numerous on that part of the coast. At first they were shy, but when once that feeling was overcome they became



DUSKY SOUND.

exceedingly troublesome, stealing whatever they could lay their hands on, and finally, the white men having offended them in some way, they gave them their first experience of a bush-fire, setting fire to the dry grass and burning their camp and many of their stores. Luckily, however, the ship was just ready for sea, and the gunpowder and other necessities had been put on board the day before, so that all was not lost, and several volleys of small shot fired into the legs of the blackfellows, who could be seen on a neighbouring cliff jumping, yelling, dancing with delight at the damage they had done, served to show these Indians, as Cook calls them, that the white man could not be injured with impunity. This occurred at the mouth of the Endeavour river, and Cook built a cairn there to commemorate his landing. Only a short time since this cairn was discovered on the top of a hill 1,000 feet above the sea-level, almost hidden by the long, coarse grass. Apparently, no man's hand had touched it since it had been built by those sailors long since dead and gone, and all but forgotten; but in the hundred years that have elapsed since last it was visited, a tall tree had grown out of the side and scattered some of the stones, otherwise it was just as it had been left by the great captain and his crew in 1770.

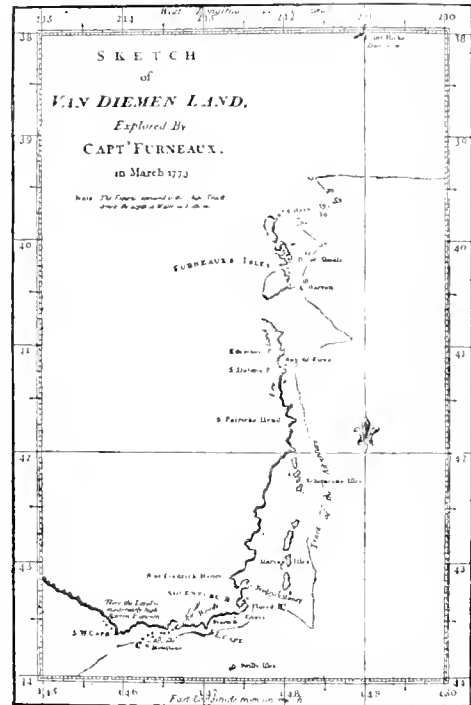
Cook did not pursue his discoveries much further; he sailed north, rounded Cape York, and here, on a little island about four miles from the Cape, he landed with some of his crew, and, hoisting the Union Jack, took formal possession of the whole of the eastern coast of the great South Land in the king's name, and gave it the somewhat cumbersome title of New South Wales; thence he sailed for home, satisfied, as well he might be, that he had thoroughly performed the task assigned him.

The great explorer's next voyage to southern seas was begun in 1772, when he was sent out in the *Resolution*, accompanied by Captain Furneaux in the *Adventure*, to seek for the continent which was popularly supposed to lie in the extreme south. In the thick fogs within the Antarctic circle the two ships lost each other, and accordingly made for their appointed rendezvous, Dusky Sound, New Zealand, which was reached by Cook in March, 1773. As this voyage added nothing to what was already known, we need touch on it only to mention that it is here we are first told of Cook's practice of putting animals ashore, in the hope that they might breed and multiply. That they have done so the wild pigs of New Zealand amply testify, though the fowls, geese, and goats doubtless fell victims to the hunger of the Maoris. The only notable fact about this voyage is Furneaux's visit to Tasmania, the first time it had been seen by white men since Tasman's visit over 130 years before. Furneaux was not cut out for a great explorer; he was all anxiety to rejoin his chief, and had evidently no desire to explore these silent seas on his own account. He sailed into a bay on the east coast, which he called Adventure Bay, after his ship, and there stayed five days. No inhabitants were seen, but they saw plenty of smoke and many fires, while they found some deserted huts—or, rather, wigwams—of the most wretched description being merely boughs with the thick ends stuck in the ground in a circular form, the tops being bound together with grass, while the outside was covered with bark or fern. In the centre was the

fireplace, surrounded with heaps of shells, showing of what the chief food consisted, while the only furniture—if furniture it could be called—was a basket or two and some nets of grass, together with a few spears, which were mere pointed sticks hardened in the fire. On the whole, Captain Furneaux formed but a poor opinion of this now extinct race, and concludes truly that they were “an ignorant, wretched set of mortals, though natives of a country capable of producing every necessary of life, in a climate the finest in the world.”

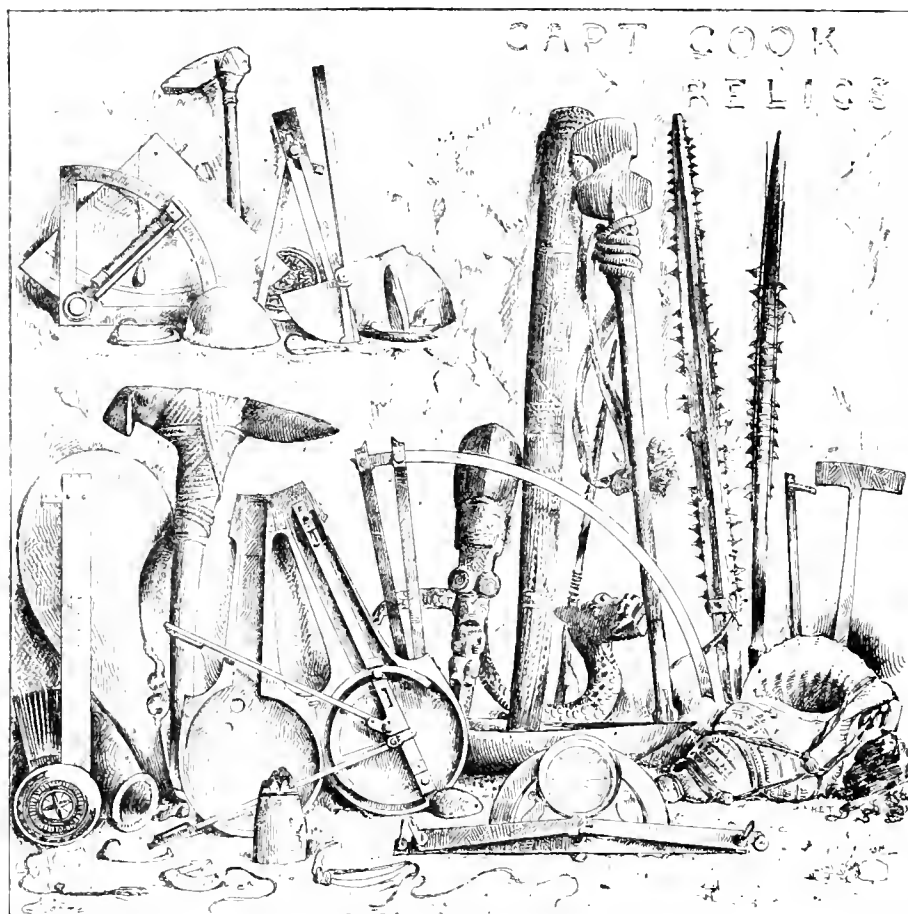
These observations future generations found true enough; but he made this further discovery, which was not very valuable, namely, “that there are no straits between New Holland and Van Diemen’s Land, but a very deep bay;” after which, having touched at the islands which bear his name, he sailed away, and rejoined his consort in New Zealand. While there a terrible tragedy took place. Having once more separated from Cook, Captain Furneaux was obliged to lie up in Queen Charlotte’s Sound, in order to repair his ship, and the Maoris, as was now usual, came flocking down to the shore, and entered into friendly relations with the explorers. Unluckily, the English managed to offend the Maoris in some way, and on the very last day of the ship’s stay they set on and slew the cutter’s crew, which consisted of eight men and two officers, who had been sent ashore to gather wild celery for the ship’s use. The natives gathered from all the district round, and a great feast was held, to the horror and disgust of the white men, the greater part of the bodies being devoured before the crew of the launch, firing on the cannibals, dispersed them, and buried the remains of their companions with funeral honours.

The third and last voyage of Captain Cook was undertaken to discover that fatal will-o’-the-wisp, the North-West Passage. He, however, was not to attempt it from Baffin’s Bay, but from the other side of the continent—namely, through Behring Straits—and, as he made a rather roundabout voyage of it (sailing round the Cape, and touching both at Van Diemen’s Land and New Zealand), it so happens that his voyage is just worth mentioning in this place. He stayed but four days at Van Diemen’s Land, sighting it in January, 1777, but nothing new was discovered, while he did not even find out Furneaux’s mistake in describing the country as a peninsula and not an island. In New Zealand he came to anchor in his favourite resort, Queen Charlotte’s Sound, and succeeded in establishing friendly relations with the very tribe which had



REDUCED FAC-SIMILE OF CHART BY
WM. HODGES.

murdered the boat's crew of the *Adventure*; but, though he took no vengeance, he was careful that every man should go armed, and clearly showed the natives that, after their treachery, he trusted them no longer. His care seems to have been not unnecessary, for, from the account of Mr. Anderson, the surgeon of the expedition, the Maoris appear to have been bloodthirsty in the extreme, and their wars between



RELICS OF CAPT. COOK'S VOYAGES.

themselves were almost incessant. Cook's stay in New Zealand was brief, for at the end of February he left it to proceed on that voyage which terminated in his death at Hawaii a few weeks later. The great mariner, though he was not what he is often called, the discoverer of Australia, was undoubtedly the first to discover that the great South Continent was not a desolate and barren land, fit only for the rude, naked savages who inhabited it, but a land whose fertility and beauty made it worthy the notice of the great colonising nation of the world; and he is not likely to be forgotten in Australian history. The native relics figured above were found in the autumn of 1887 in pulling down a part of Sir Joseph Banks's Museum at the back of 22, Soho

Square, London, in a recess of which the doors had not been opened for about half-a-century. They were given by the distinguished navigator to Sir Joseph Banks, who was sometime his companion; and inscriptions discovered with them leave no doubt of their genuineness. They were purchased by Sir Saul Samuel for the State House Museum at Sydney.

The discovery came in the nick of time. England had just lost her colonies in America, and was casting about her for some place in which to dispose her overflowing criminal population. Accordingly, in 1788, we see Captain Hunter, of H.M.S. *Sirius*, disembarking his little fleet on the shores of Sydney Cove, Port Jackson, and laying, with poor material, indeed, the foundations of an English nation in the Southern Seas. It is a curious fact that these Englishmen, in that lonely land, cut off, as it seemed, from the rest of the world, were the men who sent the last tidings that ever reached Europe of the French expedition under La Pérouse. Just as the British squadron was about to sail out of Botany Bay, which had been found too sterile for their purpose, the French fleet sailed in. The rivals met on the friendliest terms, and La Pérouse, in one of his last despatches, speaks most warmly of the kindness and courtesy of Captain Hunter. La Pérouse merely touched on the eastern shores of Australia, so that his observations are of little or no value; but some of the expeditions that were sent in search of him did far more, and are worth mentioning here, as showing what the French did towards opening up a coast which in the future was to be nothing whatever to them.



MATTHEW FLINDERS.

Three years were allowed to elapse after La Pérouse's disappearance before the French Government made any effort to clear up the mystery that shrouded his fate, but at last, in 1791, Rear-Admiral Bruni D'Entrecasteaux was sent out with two ships, *La Recherche* and *L'Espérance*, to seek for him. Though their intention was to visit the Admiralty Isles, they proceeded from the Cape straight to Van Diemen's Land, and came to anchor in Storm Bay, which, owing to some error in their bearings, they took for the Adventure Bay of Furneaux. The magnificence of the harbour in which they found themselves astonished and delighted the Frenchmen, while the tall and stately trees, the dark evergreen forests, the rugged mountains, and, above all, the solemn silence of this unknown southern land, filled them with the deepest awe. On this occasion their stay was brief, but, having continued their voyage as far as New Caledonia, and thence round the entire continent, they came to anchor in their old quarters in Storm Bay, where they spent a month

exploring the country and examining the coast. The observations of the naturalist, M. Labillardiere, to whom we are indebted for the whole narrative, are most careful and exact, all that he then noted having been subsequently confirmed by later explorers. The aborigines (who, on their first visit, had been exceedingly shy), once they had overcome their fear of the white strangers, proved very friendly and tractable, and were found to be a mild and peaceable people, though exceedingly low down in the scale of humanity; and yet these were the people whom the English colonists, a few years later, converted into such deadly enemies that a war which well-nigh exterminated them was found necessary.

The French gave names to the places they visited and discovered in Tasmania, but few of these have survived, the best known, perhaps, being the Huon river, on the banks of which grow the pine of the same name, now so much used in cabinet work. This river was named by the French Admiral after Huon Kermadec, captain of the *Espérance*, who afterwards died on the voyage. The French, too, discovered the Derwent, which they called the Rivière de Nord, but it and other places were re-named in the following year (1794) by Captain John Hayes, of the Bombay Marine, whose visit afterwards led to the colonisation of the island. The names thus given have been pretty generally adhered to, which is a pity, as they are very prosaic, and by no means euphonious.

Meanwhile, the little colony established at Port Jackson had been progressing slowly but surely, and now threatened almost to outgrow its bounds. To the west, the Blue Mountains, unexplored—and, as was then thought, unexplorable—offered an impassable barrier, and confined the colonists to the strip of land between them and the sea, so that all explorations must needs be carried on either to the north or to the south. And now, to meet this want, arose the first of Australia's great explorers, namely, Matthew Flinders and George Bass. All who had gone before had been men seeking an unknown land, marking down its principal features, and then sailing away without further thought of stay or colonisation. But these two went out avowedly to open up the colony, and to find fresh lands for the immediate use of the people already cramped for room. H.M.S. *Reliance* came to New South Wales in September, 1795, having on board as surgeon Mr. Bass, a doctor with a passion for the sea, and the young midshipman Flinders, whose taste for the sailor's life had been roused by reading "Robinson Crusoe." These two, full of the enthusiasm of youth, burned to lift the veil of obscurity which still hung over the coast. But the colonial government hardly saw things in the same light. They wanted land, it was true, but there was little enough money in the colony—none whatever to spare for the equipping of exploring expeditions. Flinders and Bass had therefore to depend on their own resources: but they determined to let no obstacles deter them. They bought a boat, which, from her small size (she was only eight feet long) they called the *Tom Thumb*, and, with one exceedingly small boy as crew, the first true Australian exploring expedition set out. Boldly the two adventurers, with their little companion, who filled the humble office of baler, ventured out into the ocean. Fortune smiled upon them. They sailed round Botany Bay

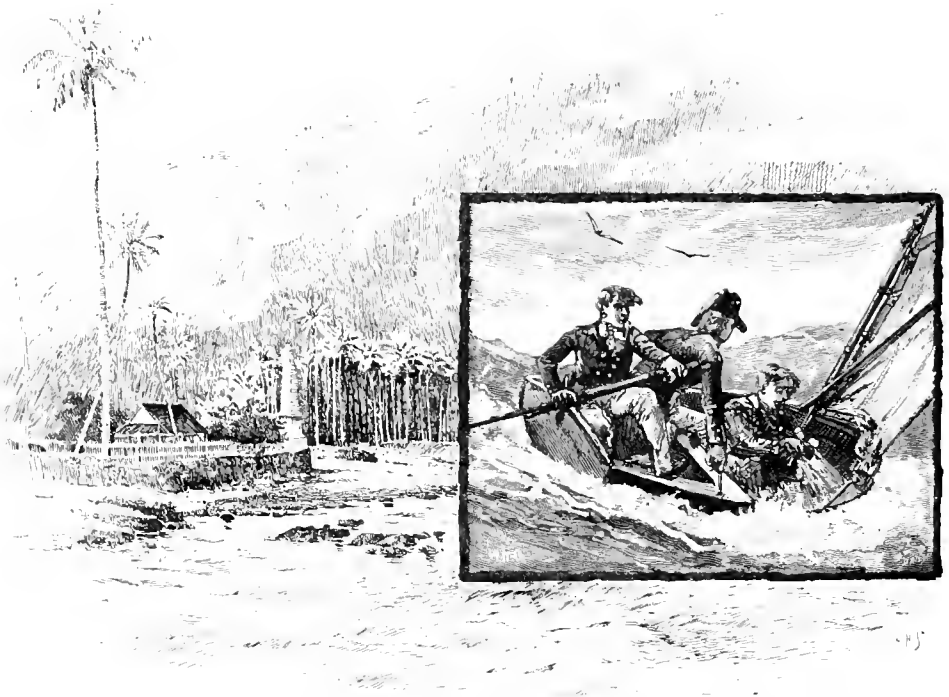
and, ascending the George River, which falls into it, explored it twenty miles beyond where the furthest survey party had then been; then they returned to Sydney well satisfied, and their unrewarded expedition bore immediate fruit in the shape of the settlement on the George now known as Bankstown.

No further expedition was undertaken that year, for the *Reliance* was bound to Norfolk Island, and her surgeon and midshipman were wanted on the voyage; but on her return the *Tom Thumb* was again launched, and with the same slender equipment set out for the purpose of exploring a large river, which rumour declared fell into the sea some miles south of Botany Bay. This expedition was hardly so successful as the former one. The weather was cold and stormy, and a current setting strongly to the south carried them further down the coast than they had intended, to a shore where it was impossible to land. They needed water, however, so Bass swam ashore with the cask and filled it; but before he could get it on board a tremendous surf arose, which carried the boat before it and left it high on the beach, thoroughly drenching arms, ammunition, and clothes. The blacks about there had the reputation of being cruel and treacherous in the extreme, so that they dared neither light a fire nor stay where they were in their then defenceless condition. Launching again, they made for some small islands opposite, but these proved inaccessible, and evening coming on, the *Tom Thumb's* little crew were compelled to spend the night, wet, hungry, and miserable, in the boat.

The next day they would have gladly returned to Sydney, but the breeze was too strong. At last they espied two blackfellows on shore. These, on being hailed, answered in English, and explained that they were from Botany Bay; and the explorers felt that, having been long in contact with the white men, they might be trusted. They invited them to land, telling them that further down the coast was a large river, where plenty of ducks and fish might be had. The river turned out a miserable little creek, so narrow and winding that even the *Tom Thumb* had great difficulty in ascending it; and worse still, their guides were joined by ten or twelve strangers, whose looks were by no means reassuring. However, in spite of the bad reputation of the blacks, the explorers felt the absolute necessity of landing, and drying, if not their clothes, at least their powder. They spread the powder out on the rocks in the sun, but it took some time to dry, and it taxed all their ingenuity to keep the savages amused and interested, Bass employing some to mend a broken oar, while Flinders, with a huge pair of scissors, cropped the hair and beards of all who felt inclined to submit themselves to this amateur barber. Wet powder takes some time to dry, even under the hot Australian sun, and the minutes must have dragged on wearily enough for the two explorers; but their tactics succeeded admirably, all went well, and they got the *Tom Thumb* to sea again without any opposition, and by dint of hard rowing were a good many miles nearer home before night fell. That night was not to be one of rest to the weary, worn-out men, for about ten o'clock a terrific storm burst on them from the south, and they were obliged to run before it. The terrible surf-beaten cliffs showed them plainly what their fate would be if they attempted to seek refuge on shore, while the raging seas threatened every

moment to capsize them. Flinders steered with an oar, while Bass managed the sail, and the small crew for once found his office of baling no sinecure. However, at last all their difficulties were surmounted, and after an absence of eight days they reached Sydney in safety.

Flinders and Bass now separated for a season, and though they both continued their explorations, it was not together. Bass's two voyages in the *Tom Thumb*, and an attempt he had made to cross the Blue Mountains, brought him as an explorer so prominently before the Sydney Government that he was now with some little hope of success enabled to ask them for assistance in carrying out his enterprises, the more so since he had shown how very little he required. Accordingly, he was granted a whale-boat, eight men for a crew, and provisions for six weeks, and on the 3rd December, 1797, he started on another perilous voyage, down the treacherous and dangerous coast of New South Wales. By dint of great care, and the aid of occasional windfalls in the



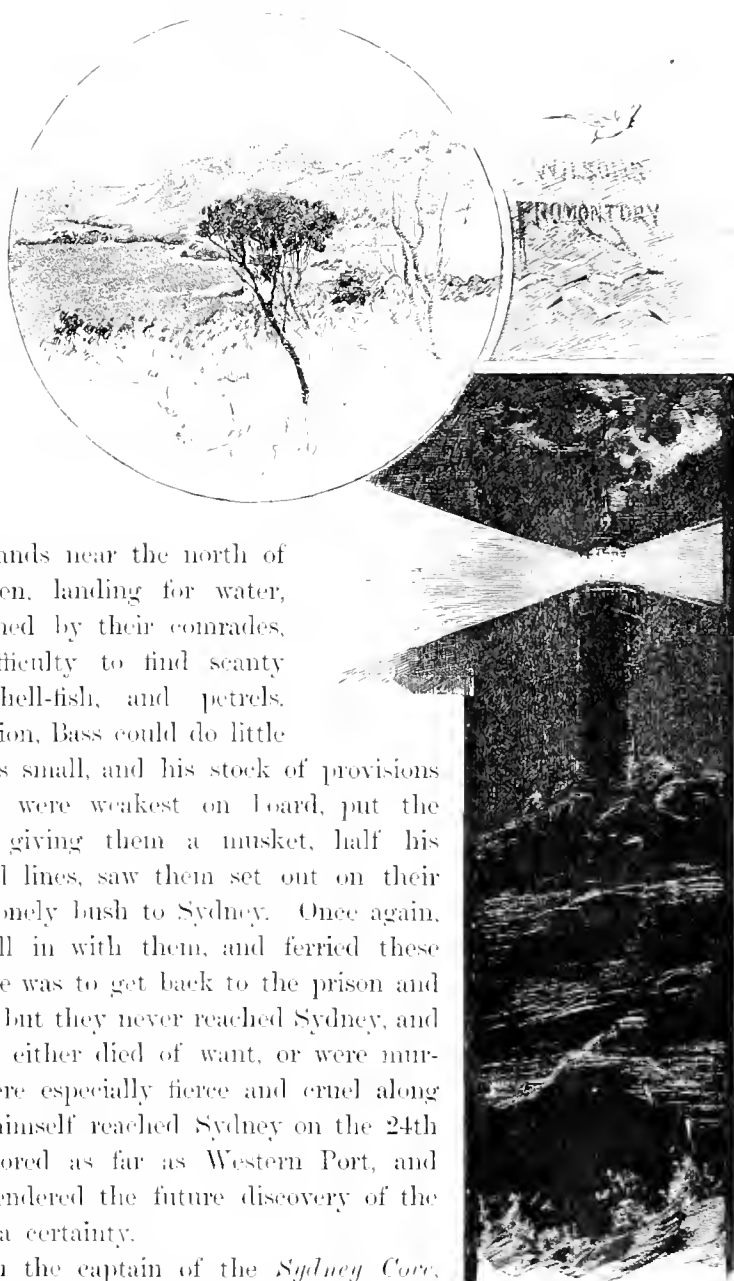
1. KALEAKULA BAY, HAWAII, SHOWING MONUMENT ERECTED WHERE CAPT. COOK WAS KILLED.
2. THE *TOM THUMB* IN DIFFICULTIES.

shape of petrels, black swans, fish, and seals, he managed to eke out his provisions for eleven weeks, and during this time ran along 600 miles of coast, 300 of which had never before been visited. He discovered Wilson's Promontory, which he called Furneaux Land, thinking it the land seen by that navigator, but afterwards, on more closely observing the appearance of the storm-tossed coast, he became convinced that that land was some distance further south, and that there was a wide strait between

Van Diemen's Land and the continent. On an island near the promontory, to the astonishment of the whale-boat's crew, they came upon seven convicts, some of a number who had made their escape from Sydney some time before. It appeared that they had seized a small colonial-built ship and sailed down south, in hopes of reaching the wreck of the *Sydney Core*, a ship from India which had been

cast away on one of the islands near the north of Tasmania. These seven men, landing for water, had been ruthlessly abandoned by their comrades, and had managed with difficulty to find scanty sustenance on seaweed, shell-fish, and petrels. Miserable as was their condition, Bass could do little for them—the whale-boat was small, and his stock of provisions low; still he took two who were weakest on board, put the rest on the mainland, and giving them a musket, half his powder, and some hooks and lines, saw them set out on their weary journey through the lonely bush to Sydney. Once again, on his return voyage, he fell in with them, and ferried these forlorn men, whose only hope was to get back to the prison and the chain, across a wide bay, but they never reached Sydney, and the probability is that they either died of want, or were murdered by the blacks, who were especially fierce and cruel along the Gippsland coast. Bass himself reached Sydney on the 24th February, 1798, having explored as far as Western Port, and made such observations as rendered the future discovery of the Strait, to his mind at least, a certainty.

Meanwhile Flinders, with the captain of the *Sydney Core*, who was desirous of rescuing such cargo as the sea might have spared him, was sailing down the same coast, examining and naming many of the bays and headlands, and among them Green Cape, which has since become so well known from the disastrous wreck off its shores. Bass's success in the whale-boat so recommended him to the Government that, at his earnest petition, he was put in command of a small-decked vessel known as the *Norfolk*; and with Flinders as his lieutenant, and eight men for a crew, he



THE LIGHTHOUSE, WILSON'S PROMONTORY.

sailed in the summer of 1798 completely round Tasmania, thus thoroughly establishing its insularity. For the first time the northern and the barren western coasts were explored and named, and Port Dalrymple and the River Tamar were discovered, the two friends bringing their successful voyage to a conclusion in January, 1799. At the request of Flinders, the name of Bass Strait was given by Governor Hunter to the channel between the island and the continent, in honour of the man who had braved so many dangers and toiled so perseveringly to find it.

From this time forward Bass passes out of Australian history; his after career is shrouded in mystery, but it is generally believed that he joined a privateer, and being taken prisoner by the Spaniards in some raid on a South American town, ended his days toiling as a slave in the silver mines of Chili or Peru. Why the two friends parted there is not even a tradition to say—for eighty years is a long time in Australian history. But for the next few years Flinders takes Bass's place as the leader of discovery and exploration in Australia.

In the winter of 1799 he was sent in the sloop *Norfolk* to explore towards the north, and thoroughly examined Glass House, Hervey, and Moreton Bays, all of which had been previously named by Cook. The immediate result of this voyage was that he proceeded to England, and there received from the Admiralty a commission to return and undertake a complete survey of the coast of Australia. This was felt to be an important expedition, and accordingly Flinders, now promoted to the rank of Commander, was put in command of the sloop *Investigator*, with a complement of eighty-eight men, and was accompanied by a landscape painter, a natural history painter, and a botanist, to whom we are indebted for the first work on Australian botany. In July, 1801, the *Investigator* sailed from Spithead, and reached Cape Leeuwin, on the southern coast of Australia, on the 7th of December, thus taking five months to do what Australian traders now accomplish in as many weeks. When he reached King George's Sound, he brought the *Investigator* to anchor, to make some necessary repairs, and, though he and his officers made a two days' excursion into the surrounding bush, they found little or nothing new, barren, sandy soil, alternating with dense scrub, being the character of the country. Indeed, the whole Australian coast, from Cape York to Cape Leeuwin, from Cambridge Gulf to Port Phillip, is strangely without variety: occasionally it is wooded and fertile, oftener barren and sandy, but at all times remarkably alike; and Flinders' voyages, interesting and valuable as they were, must have been terribly monotonous. From King George's Sound he sailed along a coast rarely if ever visited, even in these days, namely, that part of Western and Southern Australia which skirts the Great Australian Bight. For days and days he crept along this terrible coast, keeping close in shore, trusting to find some bay or inlet, but each day only revealed the fallacy of such a hope. Day after day the explorers saw barren cliffs, never less than 400 nor more than 600 feet high, stretching in one unbroken line for hundreds of miles. Neither water nor vegetation of any kind could be seen, nor could they catch any glimpse whatever of the back country. Flinders in his journal speculates, not unreasonably, on the probability of these curious cliffs being the boundary of some great inland sea, and regrets that he did not endeavour to land, and settle the matter one way or the other.

This theory of a great inland sea was a very favourite one with the early explorers, and Flinders expected at the very least to find some sort of passage or strait between the Southern Ocean and the Gulf of Carpentaria; and, therefore, when the *Investigator* sailed into the deep indentation of Spencer's Gulf, his heart beat high with hope. He was doomed, however, to disappointment. As they advanced, the shores became low and barren, some ranges were visible in the distance, which seemed to approach them on both sides. It was evident that this was merely a gulf, and Flinders hoped for at least a great river. Appearances at first seem to favour this theory, but again he was disappointed: the water shoaled rapidly: he was obliged to take to his boats, and at last reached the head of Spencer's Gulf, only to find it a dreary waste of mangroves, salt marshes, and mud-flats. "It was one degree lower," says a well-known writer, "than mere aridity. The land was quite as worthless as if it were dry, and the hopeless prospect of mud and slush and ooze gives an aspect of inutility and dark unwholesomeness which makes one shudder, especially when, amid all the wet and moisture, there is not one drop fit to quench the thirst. It reminds one of those primitive times revealed to us by geology, when there was light and air, and even life, but not a life of a high order, nor beings which could enjoy beauty in variety. The earth was preparing for something better, heaving its mud-flats to seethe and simmer, while crustaceans crawled across the slimy soil which water scarcely revealed. So it is at the head of Spencer's Gulf."

Bitterly disappointed, Flinders returned to his ship. This had been an unlucky gulf to him, for at the entrance, which he called Cape Catastrophe, he had lost his mate and the cutter's crew, who were drowned by the swamping of their boat as she was returning from the mainland. In a curious foot-note to his journal, he tells how he afterwards heard that Thistle, the mate, and some of the crew, whilst they were lying at Spithead, went to a "wise man," and had their fortunes told. The fortune-teller told them that they were going on a long voyage, and that the ship, on arriving at her destination, would be joined by another, but that before that he, Thistle, would be drowned. He also added that the crew would be shipwrecked, but not the vessel they were going out in. Flinders, after telling the story quaintly, advises shipmasters, if possible, to keep their men away from magicians. Strange to say, this one's predictions were fulfilled almost to the letter. For after discovering and naming Gulf St. Vincent, Kangaroo Island, Investigator Straits, and Encounter Bay, the party fell in with the French exploring ship, *Le Géographe*, commanded by Captain Baudin. The two countries were at war in Europe, but here, in these lonely seas, French and English met as friends, and exchanged charts and information. In after years, when Flinders visited Europe, great was his astonishment to find that the French claimed for Baudin that he had discovered all the coast lying between Western Port and Port Nuyts, and that they called the land *Terre Napoléon*. It was indeed a barren honour, for, of all the names then bestowed, only one or two on the desolate coast between Cape Northumberland and Encounter Bay now remain. At Cape Northumberland Flinders came upon a coast already explored by Grant in the *Lady Nelson*, which, though of only 60 tons burthen, was the model exploring ship of those times, being built with a sliding keel, and upon the then newest ideas in naval architecture.

Grant, however, was hardly bold enough for an explorer. Striking the coast at Cape Northumberland, he sailed on till he reached Wilson's Promontory, where, of course, he came upon the discoveries of Bass and Flinders. He missed, however, the all-important Port Phillip, sailing across a stretch of sea 120 miles in length without even endeavouring to explore the inlet. His chief characteristic seems to have been an overweening admiration for the Northumberland family, whose names he was fond of bestowing on all his discoveries. Flinders, more energetic and enterprising than Grant,



PHILIP PARKER KING, ÆT. 32.

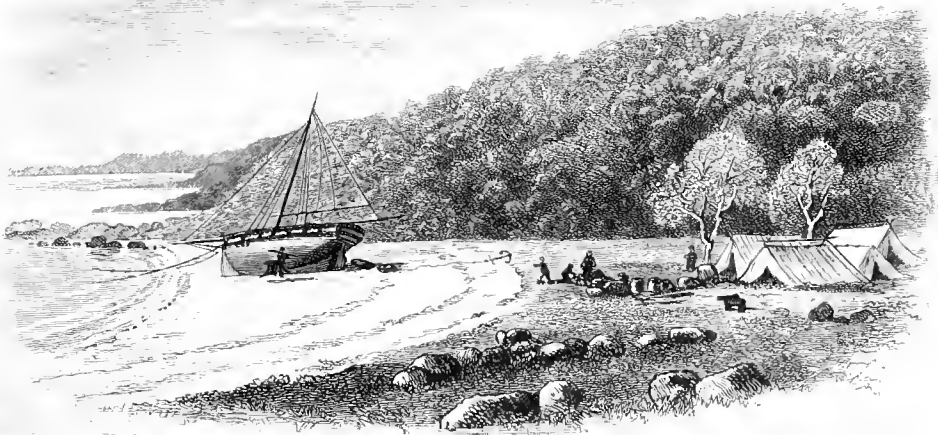
(From a Miniature Painting on Ivory in the possession of the Family.)

when he found the land trending north from Cape Otway, determined to follow up the coast, and, on doing so, to his surprise and delight came upon the large and important harbour of Port Phillip, which he named Port King, in honour of the Governor of New South Wales. He thought at first that he was the discoverer of this magnificent harbour, large enough, as he himself said, to hold a greater fleet than ever went to sea, and we can sympathise with what must have been his chagrin and disappointment when he found that he had been forestalled, by a few weeks only, by Lieutenant Murray in the *Lady Nelson*, who had given the bay its present name. After so much exploration of barren, useless coast, it was a pleasure to the newcomers to look on the comparatively fertile country that bounded this land-locked bay, and Flinders' admiration was unbounded. It is strange, too, in these days of wars and rumours of

wars, to read in his quaint journal his opinion that, in the event of a settlement being made at Port Phillip, "as doubtless there will be some time hereafter, the entrance could be easily defended." Flinders would have wondered, could he have known that, spite of his favourable opinion, thirty years would still find the fertile lands of Australia Felix left to the kangaroo and the emu, and the wandering blackfellow; while twenty years later the thousands upon thousands who came pouring through those gloomy heads must have far more than realised his wildest dreams.

From Port Phillip to Port Jackson there was nothing left for Flinders to do. His own discoveries, and those of Bass, had long before exhausted that coast, and accordingly his next voyage was made along the north-east coast, Lieutenant Murray

bearing him company in the *Lady Nelson*. Soon, however, he sent back his consort as unseaworthy, and the *Investigator* proceeded alone. All the east coast of Queensland—New South Wales, as it was then called—had been visited, and most of the places named by Captain Cook. Flinders but verified and corrected Cook's charts, and it was not till he entered the Gulf of Carpentaria that he again found himself sailing in unknown seas. His thoughts were still running on a strait to the Southern Ocean—or, at the very least, a deep inlet—which should take him far into the interior of the country: but again he was doomed to disappointment. Very minute and careful are his descriptions of the great northern gulf, and the story of the



THE MERMAID BEACHED IN CAREENING BAY.

voyage is told day by day with almost wearisome exactness: here, however, it will suffice to describe in general terms what he found. A great gulf 500 miles in length, and averaging 300 in breadth—or, as one writer puts it, as long as from the Isle of Wight to Aberdeen, and as wide as from Land's End to the mouth of the Thames. A great gulf, truly, large enough to hold England itself, but dreary and uninteresting in the extreme. As Spencer's Gulf is in the south, so is Carpentaria in the north. Low shores bounded by dreary mangrove swamps, the noisome mud sometimes relieved by patches of sand glaring yellow in the tropical sunshine: rapidly-shoaling waters and sandbanks to seaward; stunted eucalypti, mangrove swamps, and salt-marshes on shore; here and there an opening, which proved to be the mouth of a river, with the everlasting bar of all Australian rivers stopping further progress; and occasionally a few wretched blackfellows, who would come off and stare in

wonder at the ship, or, more probably, with the nonchalance of the true Australian aboriginal, go about their business and take no notice whatever of the strangers. Dreary, uninteresting, hot, and desolate the Dutch had found Carpentaria a century and a half before; so Flinders found it nearly ninety years ago, and so does it appear to the few who visit it at the present day. On a little island in the gulf, called Sweer's Island, there stands a tree known as the *Investigator* tree; at least, it stood twenty years ago. Of this a sketch was made in 1868 by Mr. J. G. Macdonald, a veteran explorer, who says that the name "Investigator," and the date, 1803, were quite legible when he made his drawing.

It was while in this gulf that Flinders discovered that the *Investigator* was not only unseaworthy, but absolutely rotten, and we cannot but wonder at the indomitable will and courage of the man who, under such circumstances, still continued his explorations in those strange seas—desolate even at this day, indescribably more so eighty years ago. At last, however, greatly against his will, he was obliged to leave the coast of Australia and to put into Timor, not only to refit his rotten ship, but to procure fresh provisions for his crew, who were beginning to show signs of scurvy. Thence he sailed round the west coast, again through the straits he and Bass had discovered, and back once more home to Sydney Harbour, reaching it on the 9th of June, 1803. It was his last voyage of exploration. Of his crew, some had died on the long voyage round by the west coast, many were dying, and of the rest the majority were stricken with dysentery and fever, while all were sick and ailing; and, above all, the *Investigator*, on her arrival, was condemned by the authorities as unfit for further service. One would have thought Flinders had done enough to raise the veil of mystery which for so long had hung over the great South Land. In the little *Tom Thumb* he and Bass had, unaided, explored the south-east coast, in the *Norfolk* they had circumnavigated Tasmania, and now he had sailed completely round the island continent. Still, he was not satisfied. It was useless petitioning the Governor for a ship, for he had none to give, and there was nothing for it, therefore, but to sail for England and petition the Admiralty. Accordingly, in July of the same year, he left Port Jackson in the *Porpoise*, the *Cato* and the *Bridgewater* being in company. The two former, five days after, became total wrecks on the Great Barrier reef, and Captain Pahner, of the *Bridgewater*, to his eternal shame, cruelly sailed away without even sending a boat to their aid. It is not often in this world that punishment overtakes the sinner so promptly as it did the crew of that ship. She reached India in safety, and thence sailed for Europe, but she never reached her destination, and not one soul on board was ever afterwards heard of.

Meanwhile, Flinders was perhaps the best man the wrecked crews could have had to rely upon in such an emergency. The men, all save two, were rescued, and, collecting what they could from the wrecks, managed to exist on the sandbanks, while he went in the longboat to Sydney for aid. After much suffering he reached Port Jackson, and two small ships were put at his service, with which he went to the rescue of his companions. One of these ships was a small colonial-built schooner of only

twenty-nine tons burthen; but so eager was Flinders to proceed to England that he decided to continue his journey in her. As might have been expected, she proved too small for the service, and, before she had crossed the Indian Ocean, so sadly needed repairs that he was obliged to put into Mauritius, relying, though English and French were at war, upon a passport given him as an explorer by the French Government. He was seized as a spy, and, though he proved his innocence, for six long years he languished in that island prison. His charts were taken from him and forwarded to France, and by means of them the French Admiral Baudin was reaping the reward and fame that should have belonged to him. When at last deliverance came, it was too late. His very name had been forgotten amidst the stir and bustle of the time; his toils and his sufferings, his patience, his perseverance, and his success, had passed away utterly from men's minds. He set about publishing his journals, relying upon them to restore his lost renown; but again it was too late. On the very day they were published one of the bravest and best of Australia's explorers died broken-hearted. He began his great work as a simple midshipman in 1795, when the very borders of Sydney itself were scarce known, and ideas with regard to the rest of the coast were as vague and indefinite as they well could be. In less than eight years, in spite of difficulties and obstacles that to a less earnest man must have seemed insurmountable, he had not only circumnavigated the continent, but had absolutely surveyed and laid down accurate charts of all the southern, eastern, and northern coasts, from King George's Sound to the Gulf of Carpentaria; and yet for all this the great explorer received no reward, and, in Australia itself, the land for which he did so much, only a barren island in Bass Straits, a river in Queensland, a street in Melbourne, and here and there a county, are now known by his name.

Flinders left little to be done by those who came after him, for the only part of the coast he did not survey was that between Arnheim's Bay and King George's Sound, a part which had frequently been visited before. The next to take up the arduous task of Australian exploration by sea was Captain King, who, between the years 1817-22, made no less than five voyages of exploration round the coast, and, taking up the surveys where Flinders had left off, added much to the knowledge of the coast. A special interest may be said to attach to him, for he was born in Australasia, and was therefore the first of Australia's sons who took up this work. Philip Parker King was the son of Philip Gidley King, third Governor of New South Wales, and was born at Norfolk Island whilst his father was Lieutenant-Governor of that settlement. He entered the Royal Navy at the usual age, fourteen, in the year of the Battle of Trafalgar, 1805, and, having exhibited a taste for marine surveying, was entrusted as a lieutenant with the examination of the coast of Australia, in continuation of the work of Flinders. To Sydney he came in the transport *Dick*, with the 48th Regiment, the voyage taking six and a half months. There being no Government vessel in the colony suitable for the purpose, the Governor (Macquarie) purchased a cutter of eighty-four tons, named the *Mermaid*. Her ship's company consisted of two master's mates, the botanist Allan Cunningham, twelve seamen, and an aboriginal.

named Bungere. Following the example of Flinders and Bass, young Lieutenant King did not hesitate to set out in this small vessel on his hazardous enterprise. Three voyages were made in the *Mermaid*, and a fourth in a brig, the *Bathurst*, the continent being thrice circumnavigated as the readiest means of going to and from the work, Sydney being head-quarters. In these voyages, particulars of which may be found in his published narrative, "King's Australia," the track through the inner passage to Torres Straits was carefully laid down, and for many years, until his surveys were



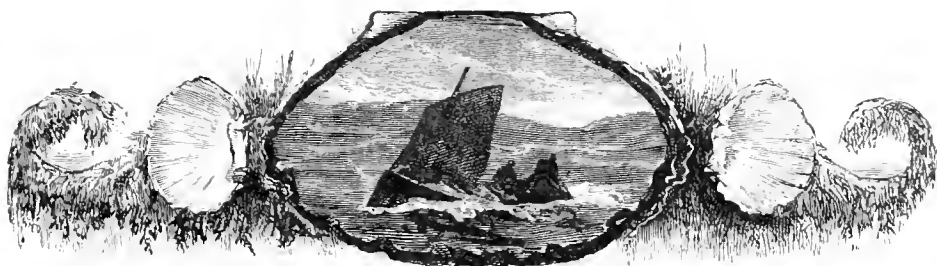
CHARLES DARWIN.
(From a Bas Relief by Professor Legros.)

superseded by those of later officers, Captain King's tracks and charts were always spoken of in the highest terms of admiration. It can safely be asserted that where his sailing directions have been carefully followed no accident has ever happened.

Captain King's next services were in the survey of the South American coast, where his ship, the *Adventure*, had the *Beagle*, under Captain Fitzroy, as consort. His health having been severely tried in these arduous and anxiously exciting labours, Captain King availed himself of the privilege of retiring from the active list. In 1831 he left England to join his family in Sydney, and was for many years a prominent colonist of New South Wales. Six years after his arrival he accompanied Sir Richard Bourke in H.M.S. *Rattlesnake* to Port Phillip, to decide upon the site of the township and name

the streets of the future Melbourne. The party visited Geelong and its neighbourhood, and then Mount Macedon, where Captain King made a number of observations, and was able to bear testimony to the correctness of those made by Sir Thomas Mitchell, who had named the mount on his trip to Portland Bay. In 1855 King was entered on the list of Rear-Admirals, but did not long survive the honour. His last evening was spent amongst brother officers on board H.M.S. *Juno*, in Sydney Harbour, and a few days afterwards they accorded his remains a naval funeral.

The accounts that King gives of his voyages show that they were monotonous and devoid of incident, and, though his notes are most copious, they are of interest only to the seaman or the naturalist. Not until 1837, the year of Governor Bourke's visit to the infant Melbourne, were any further explorations made on the Australian coast. In that year H.M.S. *Beagle* was told off again for the duty. For six years she was employed in various surveys along the coast, but though the work was well and thoroughly done, no fresh discoveries of any importance were made, and, like those of King, the journals of the *Beagle* have more interest for navigators and naturalists than for the general public. But with the voyage of the *Beagle* one splendid scientific reputation is inseparably linked; and Australia has her share, small though it be, in the renown of Charles Darwin.



THE TOM THUMB AT SEA.

ROCKHAMPTON.

Situation—"King-barking"—Athelstane Heights—General View—North Rockhampton—The Five Roads—Olsen's and Johannsen's Caves—Historical—The Canoona Rush—Disappointment—Spear Grass—Meat Export—*In Extremis*—Mining—Mount Morgan—The Dee Mountains—A Valuable Pigsty—The People—Climatic.



ON THE FITZROY RIVER.

ROCKHAMPTON, a town of 12,000 inhabitants, the chief port through which the stations of Central Queensland get their supplies, and from which the wool of the same district is exported, is situated a few miles within the Southern Tropic, on the River Fitzroy, forty-five miles from its mouth. The place is built on a flat between the right bank of the river and a short line of low hills, called the Athelstane Range. From the top of this range the prospect is very extensive, and gives a complete view of the distant boundaries of the plain in which Rockhampton stands. This plain, which includes the lower part of the valley of the Fitzroy, stretches in a southeasterly direction down to the sea. On both sides it is bounded by chains of mountains and hills which at Rockhampton close in and reduce the width to about ten or twelve miles. Towards the sea isolated mountains rise from the flats, the curious outline of Mount Lar-

combe being conspicuous on a clear day. The view to the north-west again is closed by isolated hills and mounts of many forms—conical, serrated, and flat-topped. In fact, the view from the range is charming. It is especially so about sunset, whether you look towards the north on the regular outline of Mount Etna or the jagged lines of Mount Parnassus, to the west over the lagoons which are glittering in the light of the setting sun, to the Moornish Mountains, dark with purple shadows, to the east on the huge mass of the Berserkers, which at sunset often throw off their usual green and appear to be clad in heather from head to foot, or to the south by the Table Mountain across to the distant Dee Ranges, which are still near enough to show bare and abrupt cliffs. Unbroken forest covers all the mountains, and extends over the plain to within a mile or so of Rockhampton, which may be said to occupy a mere clearing. Homesteads are scattered over the whole district, but the chief industry as yet being cattle breeding on the natural pastures, the clearings for tillage are of such small extent that to a distant observer the natural scenery has not been modified to any appreciable extent by the presence of man.

On the plain there is open, well-grassed forest country. Here and there may be found dense scrubs, and small clearings for homesteads or cultivation paddocks. Not uncommon are areas in which every tree has been "ring-barked," the first step towards the improvement of the pasture, but one of the most melancholy sights that Australia can show. A "ring-barked" paddock is a sight that would make a poet shed many poetic tears. Think of hundreds of acres of dead trees stripped of leaves and twigs, clutching at the sky with bare arms, irresistibly bringing to mind the words of Drayton—

"Our trees so hacked above the ground
That where their lofty tops the neighbouring countries crowned,
Their trunks (like aged folks) now bare and naked stand,
As for revenge to Heaven each held a withered hand."

But as a white man will do the work at one shilling per acre, and a blackfellow for a pennyworth or two of opium, and as the feeding power of the pasture is very substantially increased by the operation, the poet would have but little chance of being listened to, nor would his tears have much effect on a heart that is hardened by the prospect of a profit of cent. per cent.

The river breaks into the plain from the mountains some thirty-four miles to the north-west, and runs in a general easterly direction past Canoona across to the township of Yaamba, where it just feels the influence of the tide. Then it turns to the south-east, and forty-five miles of meandering brings it to Rockhampton, midway in the flat between the Berserker and Athelstane Ranges. About the same distance further among flats, marine plains, and mangrove swamps, and it reaches Keppel Bay.

We will now take a view of the town and its immediate surroundings, which may best be seen from the Athelstane heights. On looking east it is seen to cover the level space between the spurs of the range and the river. It is laid out in rectangular blocks, formed by streets of generous width running at right angles with or parallel to the river. Notwithstanding this symmetry of plan, the houses appear to be scattered very irregularly; for there are many vacant allotments belonging to owners who are possibly waiting for the "unearned increment" to assume substantial proportions. Towards the river, however, where the business part of the town is situated, the buildings are more closely packed. Away from the main street the houses are nearly all one-storeyed, built of wood, and roofed with corrugated iron. They all have verandahs, except in some few deplorable instances, prompted by memories of cottages at home. Among the most noticeable buildings are the Hospital and the Grammar School on the range, and the English Church, the Court House, and the Brewery on the flat. With all the facilities there are for obtaining and growing splendid creepers and shade trees, the general aspect of the town is bare and naked. But the town council have made very enlightened efforts in the way of street planting; and if their example is followed by the owners of houses, some day, perhaps, foliage and building will be so mingled as to form a very pleasant sight to look upon, as well as to modify the temperature and subdue the glare of the sunlight. As it is, on a hot day the rays of the sun, falling directly on the broad streets and reflected from the

iron roofs, give a sense of glare and heat which it is difficult to forget. But this may be said of many other towns.

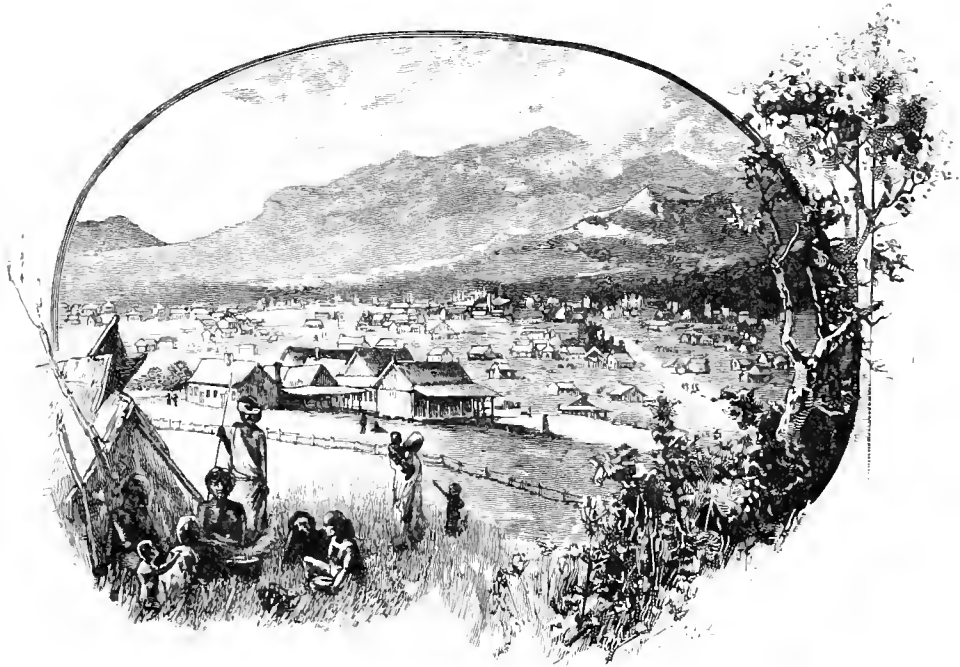
One of the streets is continued across the river by a splendid bridge 1,200 feet long. On the other side, a spectator on the range would see the young municipality of North Rockhampton straggling for miles along the river, with the forest behind, which seems to entangle some houses in its border, and then passes unbroken over the mountain mass of the Berserkers, to be checked only by the sea twenty miles away.

Most of the traffic of the district is carried on by the railway which runs up a valley that penetrates the mountainous country to the west. There are besides five main roads; one, called the Port Curtis Road, leads down the flats to the south-east, and under the distant Mount Larcombe to the town of Gladstone. This place is beautifully situated on Port Curtis, and was once thought to have before it a prospect of brilliant prosperity. It is older than Rockhampton, and while Queensland was part of New South Wales it was strongly supported by the Government. But it proved a weakling, for it was cut off from the back country by high and almost impracticable ranges, and commerce must take the line of least resistance. In the race for wealth Rockhampton has, therefore, gone ahead, while beautiful Gladstone remains sullenly in the rear. Another road goes north through Yaamba, throwing off branches to various stations, townships, and gold-fields, and a third follows the central line. The other two lead to Enn Park and Yeppoon, the chief health resorts of the district, which are both situated on a part of the coast where a combination of wooded promontories, yellow sands, grass-covered hills, island-studded sea, and magnificent land-scapes, forms the loveliest of scenery.

Besides their watering-places, the pleasure-seekers of Rockhampton have an agreeable resort in the limestone caves discovered not long since in the hilly country in the neighbourhood of Mount Etna, and named after the finders, Olsen and Johanssen, two Norwegian settlers. They are situated in dense scrubs, which accounts for their being so long unknown. Their scientific interest is not great at present, for they are not extraordinary in themselves, and are obviously accounted for on the common theory of limestone caves. What a breaking up of the floor and a scientific examination of it would produce remains to be seen.

Within half-a-mile or so of Olsen's Caves the visitor gets his first sight of the limestone crags, which at that distance, owing to the peculiar weathering, present the appearance of numberless cascades falling into the scrub. He then passes on through the dense forest, and in a short time finds himself suddenly facing the grand entrance of the caves, and is sure to think for a time that he has never seen anything so beautiful and romantic. There are grey, overhanging, threatening rocks, hung with green creepers, and topped with the foliage of umbrella and fig-trees, whose roots creep and writhe down the face of the cliff; there are tall, straight stems shooting up to expose their heads to the light; and there is the mysterious opening, in which the light on the rocks gets dimmer and dimmer, and fades away into blackness. His imagination is powerfully affected. But soon he sees a wooden paling, glaringly new, and a new wooden shanty, with other abominations, and his illusions are

half gone. He then gets his candle and climbs about, and sees many scenes, sublime, and curious, and romantic, but nothing strikes him like the first *coup-d'œil*. The caves are apparently very dry, and consequently the stalactitic forms are not so common as in European caves. The most curious and interesting objects are the roots of the fig-trees, which penetrate the bowels of the mountain. In many of the caves they are seen issuing from the roof, running down the walls, and plunging into the floor. Some stretch from roof to floor like tent-cables, as in the "Belfry," where a root three or four inches thick falls through a well-like opening in the roof (perhaps a deteriorated pot-hole), and, undiminished in size, reaches down to the floor twenty feet



ROCKHAMPTON.

beneath, where it disappears as straight as if strained by a pull from below. Interesting, in the sense of exciting disgust, are the advertisements of boots and shoes scrawled on the walls of this romantic cave.

Johannsen's Caves are not so accessible, nor perhaps are they so beautiful, but they are more replete with natural curiosities, comprising stalactitic pillars, cascades, and curtain, and also a dripping well.

None of these caves appear to have been used as dwellings—at least, in recent times. Indeed, the modern blackfellow seems to be afraid to go into them, for fear of meeting "devil-devil." Perhaps examination of the floor by scientific cave-hunters may find signs of former occupation by man, or, at any rate, by some of the gigantic marsupials.

We have now given a short view of some of the external features of Rockhampton.

As has been seen, or can be guessed, it is a town fully provided with the means of satisfying nearly all the necessities of civilised life. It has banks, churches, schools, newspapers, hospital, orphanage, School of Arts, foundry, Chamber of Commerce, and Benevolent Society. It is a port of call for numerous steamers. It has its Brighton and Worthing, its Botanic Gardens and Parks. Yet in 1853 the whole district was in a state of primeval wilderness, in undisputed possession of the blackfellow. The scene from the range would have presented to the eye a vast expanse of woodland absolutely uninterrupted, and of green broken only by dark patches of scrub foliage like the shadows of clouds on the sea as seen from the top of a cliff. The nearest stations—using the word in its colonial sense—were at Gladstone, ninety miles to the south-east, and Rannes, about the same distance to the south-west—both at that time newly formed. Leichardt had crossed and named the Dawson and Mackenzie, and had said that in all probability they met to form a large river, but he had never seen the river. In 1854 the Archer brothers, who led an exploring party from the Burnett, came down into the valley from the Dee Mountains. They camped on one of the lagoons with which the district is studded. From some of the heights they could see the whole country and its well-defined boundaries. They found the river, which would be the natural outlet for their produce, and were the first to name it the Fitzroy. Here they resolved to settle, and form a station. Next year came up their sheep and cattle, shepherds and stockmen. The site of the old camp on the lagoon was fixed upon for the head station, which was called Gracemere. The carpenters set to work to cut and dress timber. Houses, store, stockyards, and woolshed were built in course of time. Shepherds were sent off with their flocks to outlying portions of the run, and over the present site of Rockhampton sheep pastured. But Gracemere was not long on the boundary of unexplored country. Before a year was past other stations were formed in the neighbourhood, and they also had wool to send away and stores to get from the south. The river, being of course the natural highway of the district, was utilised as far as possible, and just below the first barrier of rocks a rough wharf was built. A store for wool was erected close by, and an hotel of untrimmed slabs of wood. Where the wharves are now were thickets of mangroves, while the flat was almost a swamp, and covered with timber. The Berserkers might have been seen from the bank of the river, but nowhere else, and the Athelstane range would have been quite invisible.

In 1858, when about a dozen dwellings had been built, the young community had an experience which, except that it did good rather than harm, might almost be likened to a tornado, so soon did it come and pass away. Within a few weeks after September, as many as 10,000 men assembled and camped on the flat, and by the end of the year were gone again. It was the Canoona rush, at it was called. A digger, who had come up from Gladstone to “fossick”* in the new country, had found gold at Canoona, thirty miles up the river from the little settlement. He thought he had discovered a gold-field, and proclaimed his discovery loudly. If he had foreseen what was

* *Ibid* Vol. I., pp. 186-7.

going to happen, he would probably not have been so anxious to attract attention. In Victoria, at this time, all the sensational gold-finds had been made. The yield of the metal had begun to decline, and another sensation was due. The news from the north accordingly caused furious excitement. Thousands were eager to share in the treasures, and from Sydney and Melbourne vessels were soon crowding north filled with diggers and attendant traders. The first experienced miners who arrived on the field soon found out that they had been deceived. There was gold, but not a sufficient extent of gold-bearing country to justify the employment of more than a few men. They had come to fill their pockets, but would probably have to empty them before they could get back. Rage and disappointment filled everyone. Chapple, the miner who had discovered the field, and who had been bragging and haranguing on a pinnacle of fame, found himself one fine day with a rope round his neck about to be lynched. Only the timely arrival of the gold commissioner saved him. Meanwhile, thousands were assembling on the banks of the river at Rockhampton, checked in their journey by the bad news from Canoona. Vessels were coming up at the rate of six or eight a day. Many came to Keppel Bay, but, on hearing the news, the passengers refused to encounter the difficulties of navigation in the river, and demanded to be taken back. With ten thousand men, all disappointed, many penniless, and not a few "old hands" (convicts) and such-like characters, camped on a swampy flat, under summer heat, with mosquitoes lively by night and even by day, and frequent thunderstorms, Rockhampton could not have been a very desirable place of abode, at any rate to the storekeepers.

It can be realised now how the place gained the name of the "city of sin, sweat, and sorrow," a phrase which has given a certain amount of alliterative grace to much small wit down South. Great efforts were made to relieve the distress. The Government chartered vessels to carry off those who could not pay, and employed many in clearing away the timber, and laying out streets for a new township. At Gracemere and elsewhere temporary employment was given to others. The difficulties were at length tided over, and by midsummer the mass had melted away; only a few stayed behind to join the fortunes of the new township.

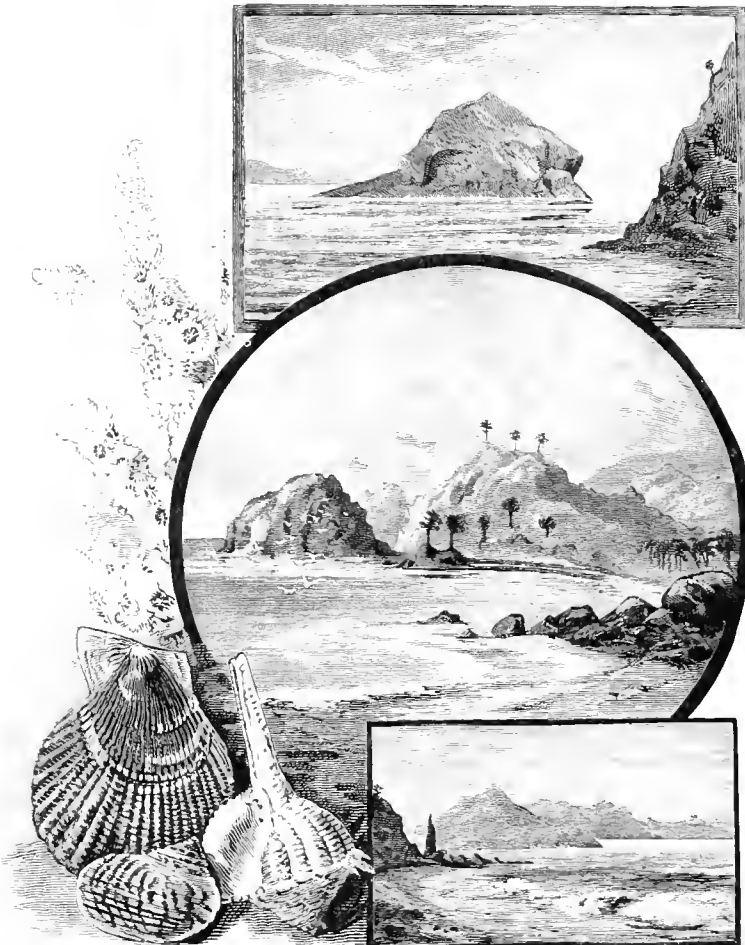
Rockhampton was now well started on its career, but its prospects were doubtful, for could its river, navigable only for smaller vessels, contend with Gladstone's fine port? Gracemere station, however, the size of a large English county, was thrown open for selection. Settlers came, and the whole countryside was gradually filled with homesteads. The western country was rapidly covered with stations, which got their supplies by the Fitzroy. Rockhampton prospered greatly, and lucky were they who bought original allotments near the river bank, and kept them. There is now a deep water port on Keppel Bay called Port Alma, but as yet it is unconnected with the town by railway. What will be the effect when the connection is made is hotly discussed.

Some twelve or fifteen years ago a great change took place in the industry of the district. Originally all the stations around started as sheep-runs, but after a time it was found that the sheep deteriorated in every way, and in a few more years they died or were sold off, and replaced by cattle. Serious losses naturally fell upon the owners, for all their yards and woolsheds, which had absorbed a great portion of their

capital, became comparatively useless. The cause of the change is not altogether clear, but it is usually identified with the spread of noxious grasses when the sweeter herbage was eaten down by the stock and rendered unable to compete in the struggle for existence. Chief among these grasses harmful to sheep is the dreadful spear-grass. This is an innocent herb enough while young and succulent, but when ripe it develops seeds like barbed spear-heads, each spear-head with a long fibre attached for a shaft. At first these spears are laid neatly together in a bundle, but after a time, under the influence of heat and moisture, they writhe and curl and twist, till they get their barbed heads almost free. Then they are brushed off in enormous numbers by the passing sheep, and insinuate themselves into the fleece, and even into the flesh and vital parts of the animal. Whether the cause is the grass seed or not, sheep have practically disappeared from the coast district, and the few that are seen are kept near the homesteads to serve for food, or are brought from distant stations to the meat preserving works, or to the butcher, to supply the needs of the town population.

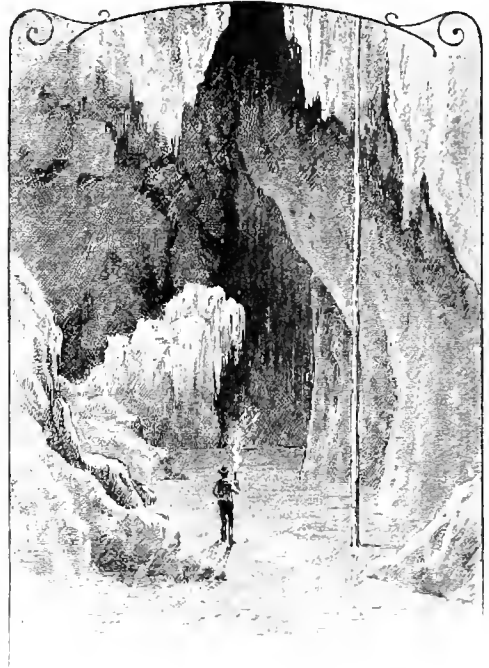
As connected with the chief occupation of the country—viz., cattle and sheep

breeding—a few lines must be devoted to the meat-preserving works just mentioned. This industry was first established in 1870, at Laurel Bank, about twelve miles up river, and two years afterwards works were also set on foot at Lake's Creek, three miles below Rockhampton. After some years of varying fortune, Laurel Creek was abandoned, and Lake's Creek was taken over by the Central Queensland Meat Export Company, which started work in 1881, favoured by the low price of cattle. The management was so good that the industry appeared on the way to a great success: the appointments were all perfect (as many as 153 fat cattle and sheep could be put through the



ON THE COAST.

process daily); freezing machinery was bought and successfully worked. The interests of the squatters bound them to support to the utmost an institution which had raised to £5 a head the price of fat bullocks, which before had fallen almost to the dreaded limit which only makes it profitable to boil down for the tallow. And the interests of the squatters are at present those of Rockhampton. But misfortunes came thick and fast. In 1883 the works were almost destroyed by fire, and by a strange fatality there was lost in the same disaster a large quantity of frozen meat, which would have been shipped the day before if the vessel which was to take it had arrived at its appointed time. In 1883, too, the drought began, the most fearful ealamity that Queensland, as a colony, has ever suffered from. In October, 1885, the works were stopped from the impossibility of getting fat beasts to operate upon. Nor were the Company's affairs in England in a flourishing condition. Tallow was unsalable even at half its former price, nor did the meat sell freely at remunerative prices. The beginning of 1886 found the Company *in extremis*. The rains had not yet fallen, though the usual time was far advanced, and the bank began to demand that the overdraft should be paid. The squatters could not help. They were suffering severely from the drought, and were looking wearily forward to another and worse year. So the Company went into liquidation. A few weeks afterwards the rain fell in unusual quantity, and the country became green and smiling. The cattle gained flesh rapidly, and fat bullocks abounded, but the price had fallen to £4 a head, and they had to be sent for sale to distant markets. A syndicate has now taken the works in hand, and how they will fare under the new management remains to be seen.



OLSEN'S CAVES.

The mining industry, too, we must mention, for is not Mount Morgan, the golden mountain, the pride of the countryside, and the wonder of Queensland? Since the Canoona rush, miners have always been at work around Rockhampton finding gold everywhere, rich patches here and there, but not enough, before Mount Morgan was discovered, to support a settled and increasing mining population. The Crocodile alluvial diggings under the Dee Mountains, fifteen or sixteen miles south of Rockhampton, did well for a time, and about the year 1865 were full of rowdy, drinking, prosperous miners. Since then smaller rushes have taken place, but, on the whole, the gold industry was languishing, when in 1880 the brothers Morgan, while "fossicking" in the Dee Ranges, came across the mountain which bears their name, and happened to

try the stone for gold. Experts had years before searched these ranges through and through for copper, and miners from Crocodile had ransacked every gulley for the usual signs of gold; but apparently none had stopped at Mount Morgan, or, having stopped, could have suspected from their former experience that such a stone could bear gold. There was no delay in introducing capitalists, and when machinery was put up, and the process of extraction perfected, it was found that the yield was six or seven ounces per ton of stone. The gold, besides, was remarkably pure, being worth over £4 an ounce. But, more than this, there were no expensive shafts to sink, and no lifting of material to be done. The stone is simply quarried away. By the end of 1886, 300 men were employed, and the value of the mine is now reckoned in millions.

Naturally this discovery brought on a violent gold fever, and in their delirium men began to put their gold into the ground and into expensive machinery before the stone was really tested. In this way, sixty or seventy thousand pounds were sunk without return, and the fever abated. However, in 1886 another excitement stirred men's minds. The owner of the beautiful property of Taranganba, near Yeppoon, moved by various discoveries of reefs in the neighbourhood, was seized with the happy idea of testing for gold the rock on which his pigsty was built, and found that his pigs had been rooting for years amongst stone of extreme richness, and thus the prospect of great wealth suddenly opened before him. All his neighbours then began to root about with more vigour than ever. The results were not so striking as in the Taranganba case, but it was amply proved that gold exists over a wide area on the coast.

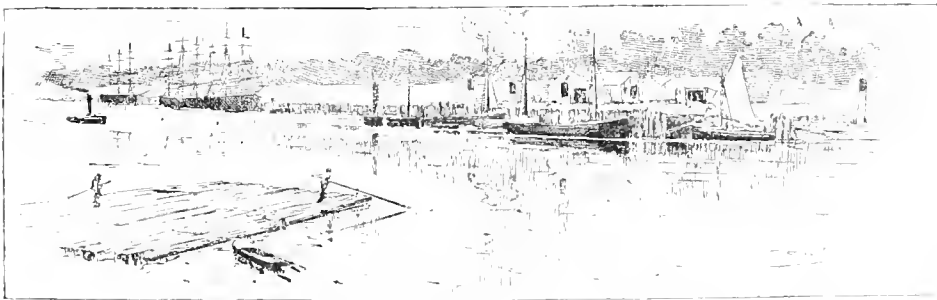
Sufficient has been said to establish the credit of Rockhampton as the centre of a gold district: but there are high hopes that the mining industry may become much more extensive, for it is a fact that, as yet, the ground has been merely scratched. Very little deep sinking has been done, and analogy with other fields goes to show that deep sinking is likely to result in a far greater production of gold. That such is the general opinion may be concluded from the circumstance that those companies that sink below a certain depth are heavily subsidised by Government, which merely stipulates to be paid from resulting profits.

The Chinaman has been in the country for many years—as shepherd in the early days, and then as market-gardener, cheap joiner, and grocer. As a market-gardener he is unsurpassed. His gardens are models of neatness, and are kept up with untiring industry. As for the natives, owing to the kind but firm treatment they met with at Gracemere, they have never been very troublesome in this district. The only conflicts there have been were in the very early days, with a band of marauders who came from the direction of Gladstone, and were said to have been guilty of the notorious massacre at Mount Larcombe Station. Since then peaceful relations have always prevailed, and the blackfellows have hunted and fished, and worked occasionally, and held their “corrobborees” as long as they were numerous enough. It would be useless to tell in full the story of the decline of an inferior race in contact with the white man: suffice it to say, that they are now a miserable remnant, as is shown every year on the Queen's birthday, when they come to get their blankets. They used to drink themselves mad with the white man's spirits, so publicans were forbidden by law to

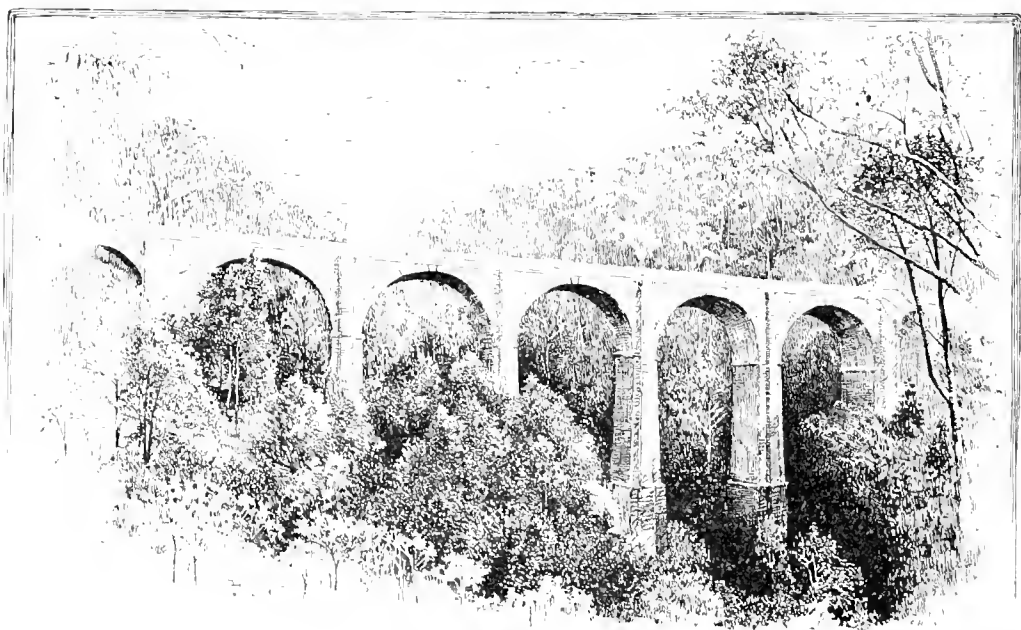
supply them. The law is the more easily carried out, as the blacks themselves have yielded to other attractions, and the yellow man's vice of opium-smoking is the one they cling to now. Without the drug they will do nothing, but for a very few penny-worths of it they will do a day's work. Many a squatter, therefore, in his dealings with the natives, has felt within him the conflict between his conscience and his interests—a conflict only too often decided in favour of the latter. The legislature has again stepped in to save the blackfellow from his bane, and now all persons are forbidden to supply him with opium under a penalty of £20. It will be interesting to see how the law works, or if it works at all.

There is no space in this article to give an account of the Kanaka or South Sea Islander. It is enough to say here that he is a cheap labourer, and as such is objectionable to the working-man, but he is employed now chiefly in such tropical labour as the white man is probably unable to perform; and as he cannot be introduced in unlimited numbers, he is not so dangerous a rival as the Chinaman.

Rockhampton has a bad reputation for extreme heat. No doubt the summer is long and hot, but no longer or hotter than is to be expected in such a latitude. Statistics show that the shade temperature during the six years 1879-1884 never reached 100°. That cannot be said of Melbourne or Adelaide, where the record rises at times to 112° or 115°. Certainly it is not so hot in Rockhampton but that many of its citizens who lead sedentary lives prefer the summer to the winter. Whatever may be said of the summer, the winter is cold enough to make fires comforting, and to drive a man to bask in the sunshine. For those who lead an outdoor life, the weather at this season is perfect. "Tis bright, 'tis heavenly," 'tis Queensland winter, in fact.



ANOTHER BIT OF THE FITZROY RIVER.



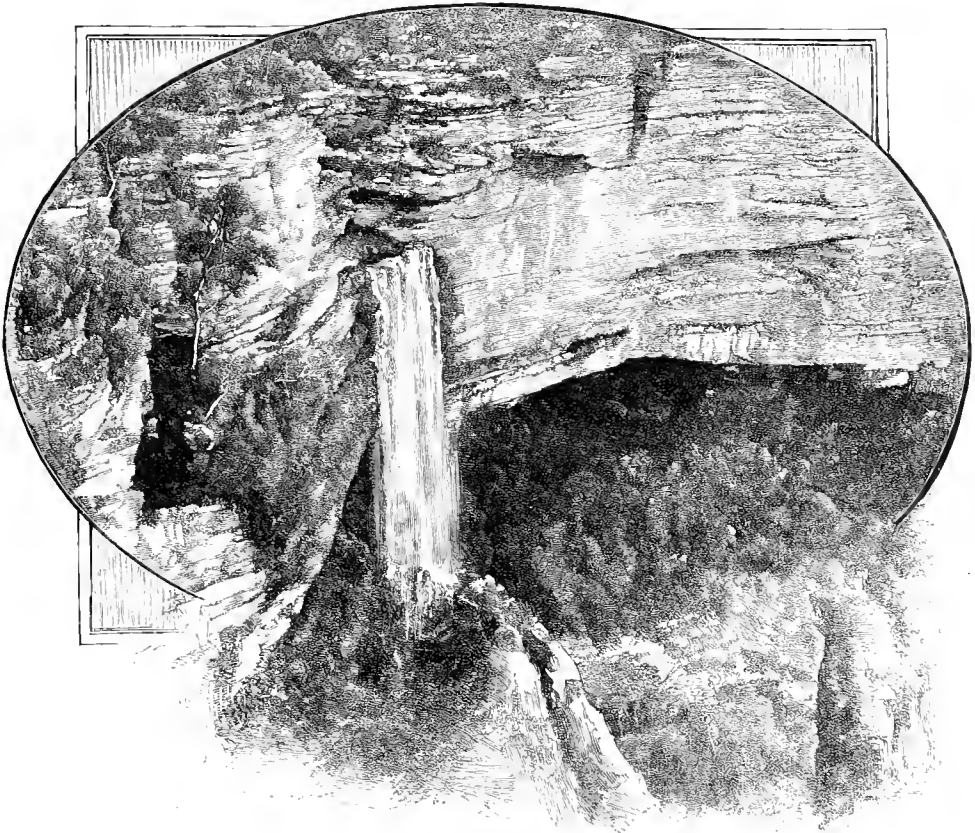
THE VIADUCT. PENRITH ZIGZAG.

THE BLUE MOUNTAINS.

A Health Resort—Darwin's Visit—Origin of the Name—The Emu Plains—The Zigzags—Early Explorations—“The Explorers' Tree”—Weatherboards—Wentworth Falls—Katoomba—Govett's Leap—Blackheath—An Inland Sea Coast—A Blue Mountain Valley—Mount Victoria—The Lithgow Zigzag—Lithgow.

IT is very fortunate for the people of Sydney that they have the Blue Mountains within easy reach. The only fault that the ordinary visitor dares to find with Sydney Harbour is the absence of mountains in the immediate foreground. The Blue Mountains form a very distant background, and in the days when travelling was difficult the range was too far away to be visited. It required the strong attraction of gold to draw people in any large number across the mountains. The best friends of Sydney allow that their fair city can be very hot, and hot with a close and clammy heat, which tries the constitution whilst it bleaches the countenance. In the summer time the wealthy folk of Sydney travel far afield, to Hobart, or to New Zealand, but those who cannot spare the time, or afford the expense, are delighted to have bracing mountain air within reach of a few hours' train journey. The use of the Blue Mountains as a health resort and a holiday playground is increasing year by year. The district was thus used first by those who were wealthy enough to build themselves villas, which were often passing simple in their structure, but involved a double establishment—town-house and country-house. Now there are large and comfortable hotels, as well as many lodging-houses, making charges suited to almost any purse. It may be confidently predicted that both classes will increase: there will be more villas and more lodging-houses. Shrewd speculators, who saw this, have already bought up the land: ground which a decade ago could have been bought by the acre almost at a nominal price is now sold by the foot.

It is the railway that has made the fame of the Blue Mountains. Some fifty years ago Charles Darwin came to Sydney in *H.M.S. Beagle*. He made a trip into the interior as far as Bathurst. On the whole, he does not seem to have enjoyed his visit to Australia, judging from the remarks in his "Naturalist's Voyage," and especially from his concluding words: "Farewell, Australia! you are a rising child, and doubtless some day will reign a great princess in the South; but you are too great and ambitious for affection, yet not great enough for respect. I leave your shores without sorrow or regret." We must remember, however, that in those days it was hard work to travel. If the eminent man of science could shortly before his death have paid Bathurst another visit, full of years as crowned with honour and with the respect of his fellows, he would have found it much more easy to approach the place, and much more comfortable to see the same sights that he saw before. His remarks with respect to the shape and formation



THE KATOOMBA FALLS.

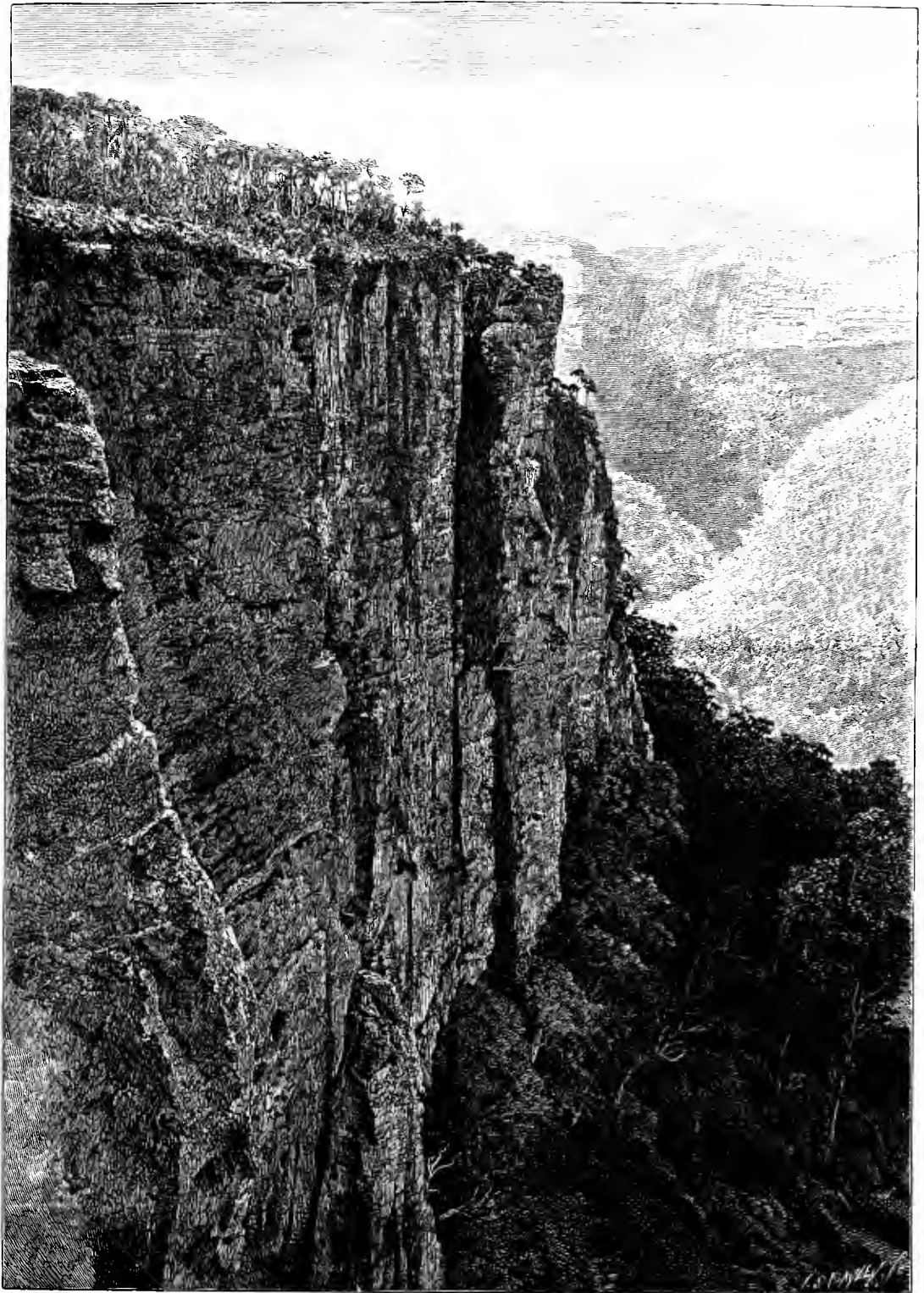
of the mountain range are still of the utmost interest and value, and will be freely used in this account.

There is no doubt about the origin of the name. The mountains are called Blue because they look blue from a distance. Almost all mountains, when seen from afar, have something of a blue haze, but Australian mountains have more of this

than others. Some think the circumstance is due to the blue gum-trees, and to exhalations therefrom; but this is, to say the least of it, doubtful. Here is a little extract from a correspondent of the *Melbourne Argus*: "They are well and happily named. All of our Australian mountains are blue in the distance, but none, I think, so blue as these. Their blueness . . . seems a positive colouring, and not a mere effect of distance. It begins so very close to you, and deepens into such deep ultramarine farther away."

As far as Penrith and Emu Plains, two railway stations on different sides of the Nepean River, the line has ascended very little. At the latter the train has come less than forty miles from Sydney, and has not risen ninety feet above the sea level. Penrith is an old-fashioned looking town—that is, old for Australia; and between Sydney and Penrith the traveller, unless he be very new to the colonies, has found comparatively little to look at. Penrith itself is chiefly famous for its tubular railway bridge across the broad River Nepean. Darwin crossed in a ferry-boat; and certainly there is a striking contrast between the old and the new crossing. Emu Plains is on the mountain side of the river. Darwin complains that the mountains were not "a bold chain crossing the country," but "a sloping plain, presenting merely an inconsiderable front." As a systematic man, he must have written his journal day by day, as he went along, and probably did not afterwards alter what he had written. One can but fancy that before his ride across the mountains to Bathurst and back was at an end he must have been satisfied with the difficulties of the mountains. This same inconsiderable front of which he speaks caused the railway engineers no slight trouble. On each side of the great mountain wall the steady climb has been overcome by the use of zigzags. "The mode of progression," says the local guide-book, "up the seemingly inaccessible heights is precisely that which a man naturally adopts as the easiest in ascending a steep bank—taking a few steps to the right, and then to the left, and thus gradually scaling the height." Each of the zigzags is in three sections. The engine pulls the train up the first, pushes it backwards up the second, and then pulls forward once more up the third incline. In the present day this is not thought by everyone the perfection of engineering, and many maintain that the continuous rise by windings up the hill-side is superior, as, for instance, in the Brenner railway, on which at one station you seem immediately above the last, though your train has made a long loop between the two.

The Blue Mountains zigzags are, however, well worth the close inspection of those interested in railway engineering. Everyone who visits the mountains will see the first, but the second, on the other side, will even better repay a visit, and should not be neglected. On the first there is one colossal viaduct. It is composed of seven arches, five of fifty feet span, and two of twenty, and the total length is 388 feet; the greatest height from the gully bed being 126 feet. By this zigzag something like 700 feet is ascended, and afterwards the train-line winds about on its journey in the ordinary way. In the course of the next fifty miles it will rise nearly 3,000 feet more. But it was the first step that cost the trouble, and plenty of money too. The first 700 feet had to be climbed in the space of a mile or two; the later ascent is taken more gradually. In ascending the zigzag the traveller is sure to be admiring the view. He may be



THE CLIFFS, MOUNT VICTORIA.

warned, however, not to fancy that he has plenty of time to take in the wide prospect that he sees. For this particular scenery the time that he has is all too short. The zigzag takes him up the side. When once the top of the first height is reached, the view over the edge is no longer to be seen. As the train rushes on, occasional beautiful prospects are to be enjoyed, sometimes on the one side and sometimes on the other; but often they are mere peeps. If the visitor stop at almost any station now, he will find within reach of a short walk scenery that will repay it, whilst the inhabitants will very likely tell him not to venture further. But it is not our intention, after the manner of a guide-book, to dilate on the separate objects to be seen within a short radius of the railway stations. If the traveller be wise, he will hold on his way undistracted to the centres of interest. These are Wentworth (formerly Weatherboard), Katoomba, Blackheath, and lastly Mount Victoria. The second and fourth of these places have roomy and comfortable hotels, and probably most visitors are of the opinion conveyed in a humorous advertisement in a book not generally consulted for humour, the English "Bradshaw": "Believe me, sir, the finest scenery in the world is much improved by a good hotel in the foreground."

The railway line, it may be mentioned, has taken the same route as the original road, made by enforced labour. This fact speaks well for the care and skill with which the original survey was made. Some little history of the opening up of the Blue Mountains may be

here inserted. Within ten years of the first settlement at Sydney, George Bass, the intrepid explorer, of whom an account is given in the previous article but one, had ventured up to the foot of the mountains, but, unable to penetrate further, had returned to Sydney with the report that it was "impossible to find a passage even for a person on foot." The first explorers who succeeded in reaching any distance up the mountains were Blaxland, Lawson, and Wentworth. To commemorate the exploit, three railway stations along the line have been named after these three intrepid men. Gregory Blaxland was a squatter, living not far from Penrith. Lieutenant William Lawson was a young officer in the army. It is pleasant to read that when the country on the west of the mountains was occupied, which followed closely on this enterprising journey, Lieutenant Lawson received the command of the troops stationed there. Within four years and a few months after this famous journey he was at the head of the military and



THE BLUE MOUNTAINS DISTRICT.

civil departments in the infant Bathurst. The third and youngest of the three afterwards attained the greatest fame. William Charles Wentworth, who, at the time of the journey in 1813 was under twenty-two, was in later life the greatest orator and one of the greatest statesmen that New South Wales has yet had. The Sydney University honours him as its founder; and a town—now small, but with a future before it—situate on the River Darling, a mile or so above its junction with the Murray, commemorates his name. The furthest point that these three explorers reached was about a mile and a half on the Bathurst side of Katoomba. At this point, to quote the words of a later explorer, they “conceived that they had sufficiently accomplished the design of their undertaking, having surmounted all the difficulties which had hitherto prevented the interior of the country from being explored. They had partly cleared, or at least marked out, a road by which the passage of the mountain might be easily effected. Their provisions were nearly expended, their clothes and shoes were in very bad condition, and the whole party were ill with bowel complaints.” Being thus forced by illness and want of supplies to turn, the three carved their initials on a tree, which stands by the side of the road, and is visible from the railway line. Of late years the tree, which is known as “The Explorers’ Tree,” has been protected by a fence, buttressed by a low wall, to which an inscription has been affixed. It is unfortunate that the inscription reads like a glorification not of the explorers but of the Minister, who must, at any rate, be held responsible for the grammar.

This wall and fence has (*sic*) been erected by the Hon. J. S. Farnell, Esq., Minister for Lands, to preserve this tree marked by

BLAXLAND,
LAWSON,
WENTWORTH,

being the farthest distance reached in their first attempt to cross the Blue Mountains in the month of May, A.D. 1813.

On the tree itself, amid many uninteresting carvings of modern date, the letters W and L are still visible, though time has obliterated the B altogether. The design of the undertaking was indeed accomplished. On the return of the explorers, the Governor sent a surveyor, named G. W. Evans, to extend the discoveries, and he, within six months, penetrated to where Bathurst now stands, 100 miles beyond the tree: and within two years a road was finished to the future town. Labour, of course, was cheap, and it was important to find work for the convicts. Napoleon, it may be added, so as to give a clearer time-mark than a mere date, was then at Elba, and five months had yet to pass before the Battle of Waterloo.

Weatherboards are planks nailed so that one overlaps the other, in order to prevent the rain from penetrating. The expression is much commoner in Australia than in England, as wood is much more used in building. In the early days many places came to be called Weatherboard, after some cottage or hut which was used as a landmark, and to help out descriptions. But the name after a while became ridiculous, and lacking in distinctiveness. The name of the Weatherboard Falls has been changed, but—except that care is now taken of the traveller by the erection of fences

to prevent his tumbling over, that trees have been planted in the reserve, and that good pathways are maintained—nothing else has been changed; and Mr. Darwin's is



THE VALLEY OF THE GROSE.

still the best description of the view from the top of what are now known as the Wentworth Falls:—

“Following down a little valley and its tiny rill of water, an immense gulf

unexpectedly opens through the trees which border the pathway, at the depth of perhaps 1,500 feet. Walking on a few yards, one stands on the brink of a vast precipice, and below one sees a grand bay or gulf—for I know not what other name to give it—thickly covered with forest. The point of view is situated as if at the head of a bay, the line of cliff diverging on each side, and showing headland behind headland, as on a bold sea-coast. These cliffs are composed of horizontal strata of whitish sandstone, and are so absolutely vertical that in many places a person standing on the edge and throwing down a stone can see it strike the trees in the abyss below. So unbroken is the line of cliff, that in order to reach the foot of the waterfall formed by this little stream it is said to be necessary to go sixteen miles round. Above five miles distant in front another line of cliff extends, which thus appears completely to encircle the valley; and hence the name of the bay is justified, as applied to this grand amphitheatrical depression. If we imagine a winding harbour, with its deep water surrounded by bold cliff-like shores, to be laid dry, and a forest to spring up on its sandy bottom, we should then have the appearance and structure here exhibited. This kind of view was to me quite novel, and extremely magnificent."

Katoomba is a place of very recent growth, but it bids fair to be the capital and centre of the Blue Mountain District. Of course, the greatest jealousy prevails between various places along the line, but Katoomba, though younger, has already passed its rivals. Katoomba has coal, and for those who like mining—not a universal taste—the Katoomba mine, with its tram worked by a steel cable two-and-a-half miles long, and weighing five-and-a-half tons, is worthy of a visit. But coal, it may be said, though remunerative to mine-owners, is not picturesque, so it must be added that the coal keeps fairly out of sight, and that the beauties of scenery lie everywhere around. Katoomba offers special attractions for the honeymoon, and in this connection it is not unknown in Sydney to "those about to marry." The visitor must visit the Katoomba Falls, the Orphan Rock, the Leura Falls, a charming spot known as the "Meeting of the Waters," and in another direction Nelly's Glen. The Orphan Rock is so called because it stands quite apart from the rest, and the probability is that, at a more or less remote period, the separation was effected by a convulsion of nature.

Nelly's Glen is from Katoomba a long but very pretty walk. If it be the right season of the year, say spring or very early summer, this glen will be found an admirable place to gather that striking large bright-red flower—the waratah. Some early settlers gave it the name of the Australian tulip, but it must in conscience be added that there is no resemblance to the bulb for which the Dutch collectors gave so much.

"Peasant girls with deep blue eyes,
And hands that offer early flowers,"

sell the waratah at railway stations for a consideration.

One warning may be given to prevent disappointment on the part of the visitor. Australia is a dry country, and the waterfalls have no body of water. They are lofty, but except under quite special circumstances are thin and scanty, not to be compared

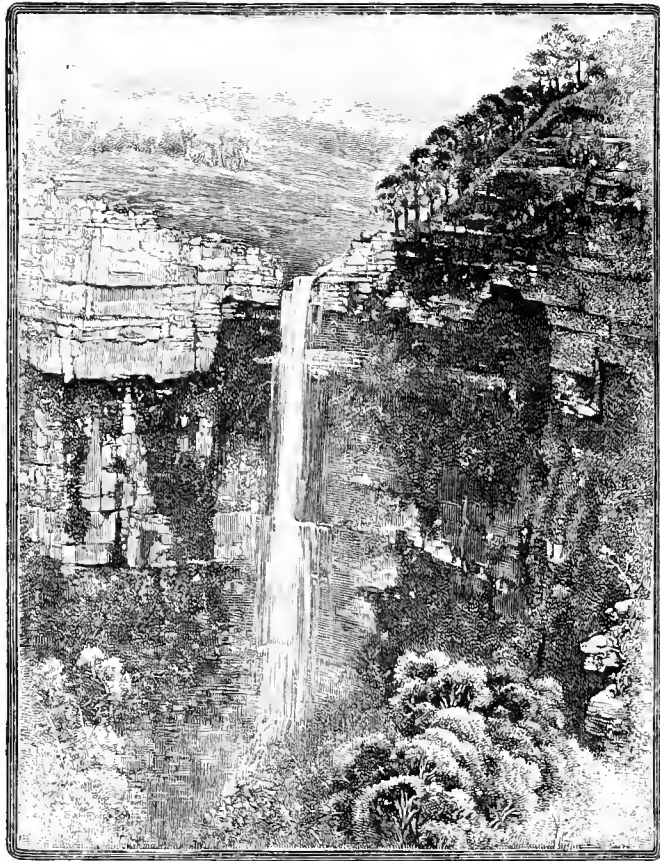
to such falls as the Schaffhausen, on the Rhine, or even as the Lodore; much rather they belong to the tribe of the Staubbach. These falls also in a high wind look like fine dust. Now and then it is given to a visitor who does not mind a wetting to see, after a tropical downpour, the fall at Govett's Leap in all its glory, but such a sight comes to the lot of few amongst its many visitors, and to most the falls upon the Blue Mountains are only what Darwin calls tiny rills, trickling over the edge of a precipice. That a great body of water, some broad river or spreading lake, amid the acres and square miles of forest trees upon which we look down, would improve the prospect, is certainly the thought of most who gaze upon the scene. But there are those who think that something would be deducted from the weirdness of the scene.

The most famous spot upon the mountains is Govett's Leap, which is best approached from the station called Blackheath—probably a reminiscence of the neighbourhood of London, where it is said the “Black” was originally “Bleak.” There is nothing, however, but the name to remind a visitor of anything English. In Mr. Darwin's time “the Blackheath was a very comfortable inn, kept by an old soldier,” reminding him of the small inns in North Wales. No Govett, it should be remarked, ever leapt over these falls. Legends soon gather round a spot, and some make Govett a disconsolate lover, and some a bushranger driven to desperation. He was really a surveyor engaged in his professional work, and far too sensible to think of jumping down. The word leap is said to be a Cumbrian provincialism for waterfall, with which explanation the fanciful legends disappear.

Its great interest and scientific value must be our excuse for making the following long extract from Mr. Darwin's account of the spot:—

“Very early in the morning I walked about three miles to see Govett's Leap, a view of a similar character with that near the Weatherboard, but perhaps even more stupendous. So early in the day the gulf was filled with a thin blue haze, which, although destroying the general effect of the view, added to the apparent depth at which the forest was stretched out beneath our feet. These valleys, which so long presented an insuperable barrier to the attempts of the most enterprising of the colonists to reach the interior, are most remarkable. Great arm-like bays, expanding at their upper ends, often branch from the main valleys and penetrate the sandstone platform; on the other hand, the platform often sends promontories into the valleys, and even leaves in them great, almost insulated, masses. To descend into some of these valleys it is necessary to go round twenty miles: and into others the surveyors have only lately penetrated, and the colonists have not yet been able to drive in their cattle. But the most remarkable feature in their structure is, that although several miles wide at their heads, they generally contract towards their mouths to such a degree as to become impassable. The Surveyor-General, Sir T. Mitchell, endeavoured in vain, first walking and then by crawling between the great fallen fragments of sandstone, to ascend through the gorge by which the river Grose joins the Nepean: yet the valley of the Grose in its upper part as I saw, forms a magnificent level basin some miles in width, and is on all sides surrounded by cliffs, the summits of which are believed to be

nowhere less than 3,000 feet above the level of the sea. When cattle are driven into the valley of the Wolgan by a path (which I descended), partly natural and partly made by the owner of the land, they cannot escape; for this valley is in every other part surrounded by perpendicular cliffs, and eight miles lower down it contracts from an average width of half-a-mile to a mere chasm, impassable to man or beast. Sir T. Mitchell states that the great valley of the Cox river, with all its branches, contracts,



GOVETT'S LEAP.

where it unites with the Nepean, into a gorge 2,200 yards in width, and about 1,000 feet in depth. Other similar cases might have been added.

"The first impression on seeing the correspondence of the horizontal strata on each side of these valleys and great amphitheatrical depressions, is that they have been hollowed out, like other valleys, by the action of water; but when one reflects on the enormous amount of stone which on this view must have been removed through mere gorges or caverns, one is led to ask whether these spaces may not have subsided. But considering the form of the irregularly-branching valleys, and of the narrow promontories projecting into them from the platforms, we are compelled to abandon this notion. To attribute these hollows to the present alluvial action would be preposterous; nor does

the drainage from the summit-level always fall, as I remarked near the Weatherboard, into the head of these valleys, but into one side of their bay-like recesses. Some of the inhabitants remarked to me that they never viewed one of those bay-like recesses, with the headlands receding on both hands, without being struck with their resemblance to a bold sea-coast. This is certainly the case; moreover, on the present coast of New South Wales, the numerous, fine, widely-branching harbours, which are generally con-



WIND CAVE, BLACKHEATH.

needed with the sea by a narrow mouth worn through the sandstone coast-cliffs, varying from one mile in width to a quarter of a mile, present a likeness, though on a miniature scale, to the great valleys of the interior. But then immediately occurs the startling difficulty, why has the sea worn out these great, though circumscribed depressions on a wide platform, and left mere gorges at the openings, through which the whole vast amount of triturated matter must have been carried away? The only light I can throw upon this enigma is by remarking that banks of the most irregular forms appear to be now forming in some seas, as in parts of the West Indies and in the Red Sea, and that their sides are exceedingly steep. Such banks, I have been led to suppose, have been formed by sediment heaped by strong currents on an irregular bottom. That in some

cases the sea, instead of spreading out sediment in a uniform sheet, heaps it round submarine rocks and islands, it is hardly possible to doubt, after examining the charts of the West Indies; and that the waves have power to form high and precipitous cliffs, even in land-locked harbours, I have noticed in many parts of South America. To apply these ideas to the sandstone platforms of New South Wales, I imagine that the strata were heaped by the action of strong currents, and of the undulations of an open sea, on an irregular bottom; and that the valley-like spaces thus left unfilled had their steeply sloping flanks worn into cliffs, during a slow elevation of the land; the worn-down sandstone being removed, either at the time when the narrow gorges were cut by the retreating sea, or subsequently by alluvial action."

By way of supplement to this passage from Mr. Darwin, we may take the following excellent description of a Blue Mountain valley, contributed to the London *Spectator*:—

"A turn in the path shows an opening in the bush, and in a moment we are looking forward fifteen miles across a valley twelve hundred feet deep. A *valley* indeed! but like no other valley anywhere existing, save in poet's vision, or fable of Eastern enchantment. Here is no 'brae,' sloping gently from the mountain-crest to the bottom of the vale; the cliff on which we stand is absolutely perpendicular, and the vast tract below, except a few isolated hills in the far distance, is perfectly flat. It seems as though the land had sunk gently down in its integrity, bearing with it undisturbed the forest which for many a mile covers the whole broad bottom of the gulf, and leaving a stark precipice in the rent bosom of the earth. The forest below exactly resembles that in the shade of which we stand. Above, the trees grow thick to the very edge of the chasm; below, the branches brush the foot of the precipitous wall. Here and there a patch of grass, green with the moisture of rivulets that run unseen beneath the trees, smiles brightly in the sun.

"Straight across the valley, ten miles away, the bush becomes gradually less dense, and for several miles on this side of a bank of violet haze, fifteen miles distant, beyond which we cannot see, there is open pasture. A white house, the dwelling-place of a squatter, lies just within the verge of the forest. The smoke of a gum-wood fire issues from the roof and hangs aloft in an azure cloud. No other sign of human life appears. To the right, a quarter of a mile off, our view is blocked abruptly by a promontory which stands out several hundred yards further into the valley. If we could see beyond it nothing would appear but the same level floor, covered with the same leafy carpet—so immense is the depth, that the forest scarcely seems more than a thick yielding carpet—which stretches fifty miles, as we can see, and we know not how much farther, on our left side. On this, the left side, we can follow the enormous escarpment, trending slightly forward from our point of view for four or five miles. Its irregularity is wonderful. Everywhere perpendicular, it stands like some majestic coast, worn by the roll of Atlantic billows; its fretted coves flanked by jutting nesses; its sweeping bays 'bastioned impreguably' by broad-fronted capes. Marvellous in proportion and outline, this stupendous curtain of rock astonishes almost as much by the boldness and singularity of its colouring. Whitish-grey from the foot upwards for four-fifths of its height, it is everywhere surmounted by a broad even band, or

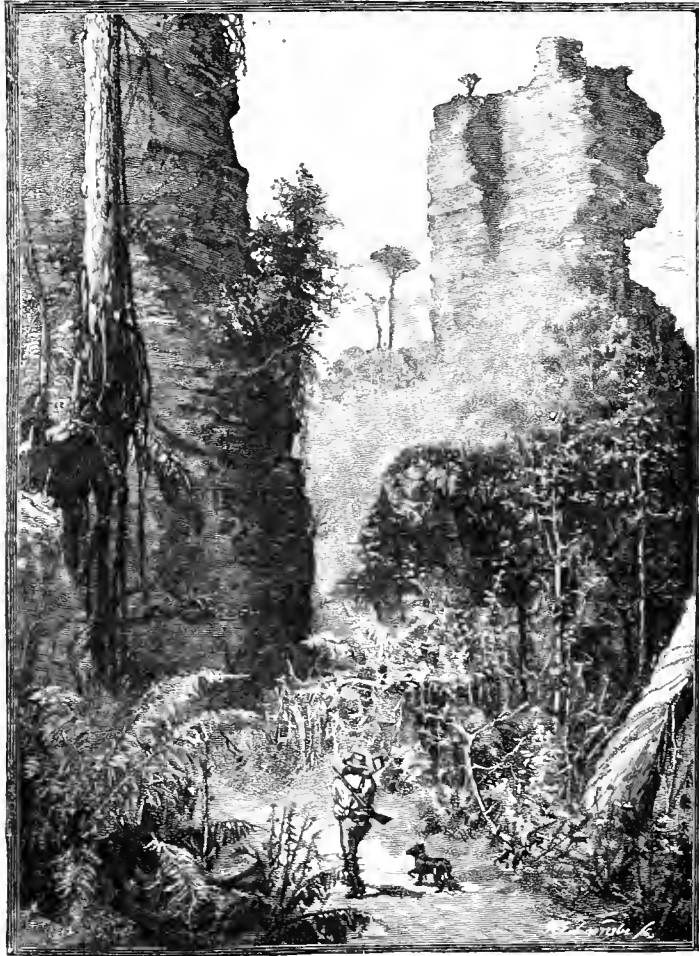
continuous cornice, or a clouded rose-colour. In a degree striking even among the landscapes of a sunny clime, the scene is steeped in colour. The deep-blue sky, with its few fleecy, gleaming clouds; the veil of shimmering haze and sapphire wreath of smoke; the indigo gulf below, with its emerald glades (like patches on a green sea where sunbeams fall through rifts in an overshadowing cloud), on one side stretching to the furthest zone of vision, on the other bounded by the giant rampart with its battlement of coral—all combine to intoxicate, without satiating, the whole being, like a deep draught of wine ‘when it is red,’ in a suffusive libation of sumptuous colour. Admiration falls faintly from the lips, or, hushed by the serene glory of the scene, remains unuttered. Many hours might we gaze, forgetting time and care, without any loss of delight or diminution of our wonder; nor could custom stale the joy, or daily familiarity by aught impair the exulting reverence, which such a prospect would ever inspire.” There is enthusiasm here, but no one who is in a position to judge will accuse the writer of exaggeration.

Mount Victoria is a township which still contends with Katoomba for pride of place upon the mountains. Coal will win beyond a doubt, but Mount Victoria is a very charming place. It is central and convenient; many excursions can be made from it. It is one of the places from which trips are made to the Fish River Caves. Except for the end of the drive to the caves—and the drive ends in a walk of two miles down hill, and down a very steep hill too—the Mount Victoria route is superior to the one more generally used. It is all a question of roads, and as Governments are liberal in opening up show-places, this route will be improved, and then will itself ultimately be superseded in favour of a road from Katoomba. Pedestrians who are not frightened at twenty-six miles go that way now, and some day a good road is sure to be made, though the bare thought of such a thing seems flat treason to the good people of Oberon and Tarana.

The traveller must go to a guide-book or a railway time-table if he wants to know the names of all the stations along the line. A great convenience is allowed by the Railway Department, which permits travellers to go to and fro on goods trains, and in the summer even attaches a passenger carriage to them. This makes the chief places on the mountains easily accessible to visitors, who will find the mountains very grand, with their deep gorges and rugged scenery. Splendid is the changing effect of light and shadow as the train passes in and out of the various cuttings. There need be no fear of raising high expectations, for no one—not even those who have travelled far and wide—can be disappointed.

A description of the Blue Mountains may be properly closed by some account of the Lithgow or further Zigzag. Here is such an account from the pen of Mr. Edwin Burton:—“Some of the cuttings through hard stone are from forty to fifty feet deep, the gradient of the line being one in forty-two, with the exception of one part near the reversing station, which is one in sixty-six. The height of the nine arches crossing No. 3 Viaduct on the middle line is seventy-six feet from the surface to the rail level. Just beyond the tunnel (about the middle of the Zigzag), which is seventy-five yards long and cut through the spur of the rock, is the scene of a great blasting operation.

Three-and-a-half tons of gunpowder, deposited in borings made in different parts of the rock to be removed, were fired simultaneously by means of a powerful electric battery by the Countess of Belmore. The next cutting is eighty feet high. There are several other cuttings and embankments, which it is unnecessary to particularise. The fall from the Clarence Tunnel to the bottom of the Zigzag is 687 feet; and the length

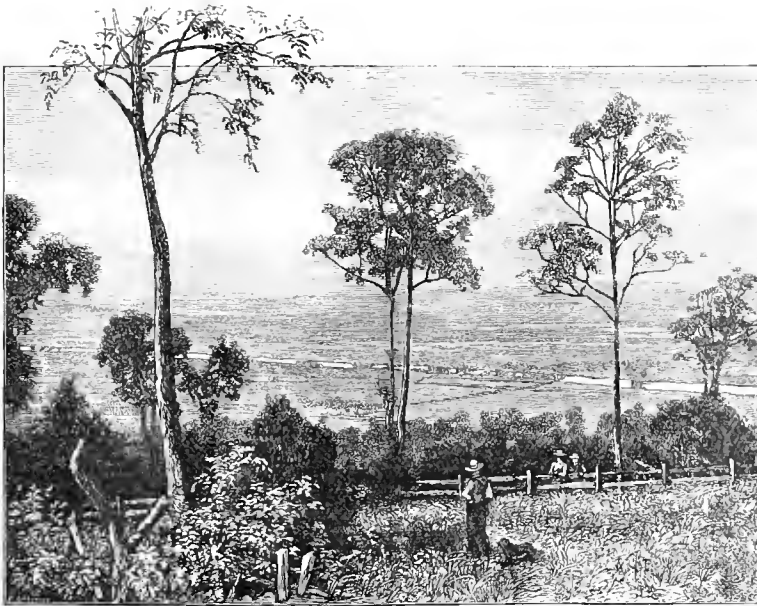


NEAR KATOOMBA.

in which this descent has been gained is five miles. A tolerably good view of this great engineering achievement may be obtained from the spurs which form the boundary-line of the gully. The best view, however, is undoubtedly to be obtained from the bottom of the gully itself. The cost of this part of the railway was between £20,000 and £25,000 per mile."

At the bottom of the Zigzag lies the town from which it is named, Lithgow, a place, it may fairly be prophesied, with a magnificent future, but like all places that are rich in minerals, and bent upon working them, not beautiful. Lithgow, it must

in sorrow be said, is not at all in keeping with the scenery through which the visitor passes to reach it. There are five collieries, producing upwards of 200,000 tons per annum, and affording employment for some 200 hands. Both the immediate vicinity and the country around are rich in coal, iron ore, and freestone; and there is a plentiful supply of water from the stream which runs through the township. The population is about 3,500. No intending visitor, it may be added, need fear that there will be no room for him at the inns, for Lithgow can boast of as many as eight hotels.



THE EMU PLAINS AND NEPEAN RIVER.

GEELONG—TOWN AND DISTRICT.

Situation—Corio Bay—The River—History—A Noble Sight—A Spireless Town—Trade—Protection—Viticulture—The Schools—The Botanical Gardens—Hospitality—"The Pivot"—The Neighbourhood—Drysdale—Portarlington—Queenscliff—"The Rip"—Armaments.

THE town of Geelong stands on the northern side of the neck of land between Bass's Straits and Corio Bay. (Corio, by the way, is a native name, to be pronounced with a long i.) This neck is about eight miles in width, and the Geelong district may be roughly described as the peninsula extending eastwards from the neck of land to Port Phillip Heads. This peninsula is about twenty-two miles in length, and from ten to thirteen in breadth from north to south. It is bounded on the south by Bass's Straits, on the west by the Barrabool hills, on the north by Port Phillip Bay and its western adjunct, Corio Bay, and on the east by Port Phillip Bay. The river Barwon, which runs about half-a-mile south of Geelong, rises in the Otway ranges, and is joined a few miles above the town by the Moorabool. It is a fine stream, and for the last twenty miles of its course averages eighty yards in breadth. Just below its junction with the Moorabool there rises on the northern side of the river a steep miocene cliff, which extends westward in the direction of Batesford. The valley of the Barwon presents at this point a beautiful prospect, hemmed in as it is to the right by the green Moorabool hills, and to the left by the white miocene ridge, while the green and fertile plains above the junction stretch away westward, with that look of illimitable space which scarce any but Australian landscapes possess.

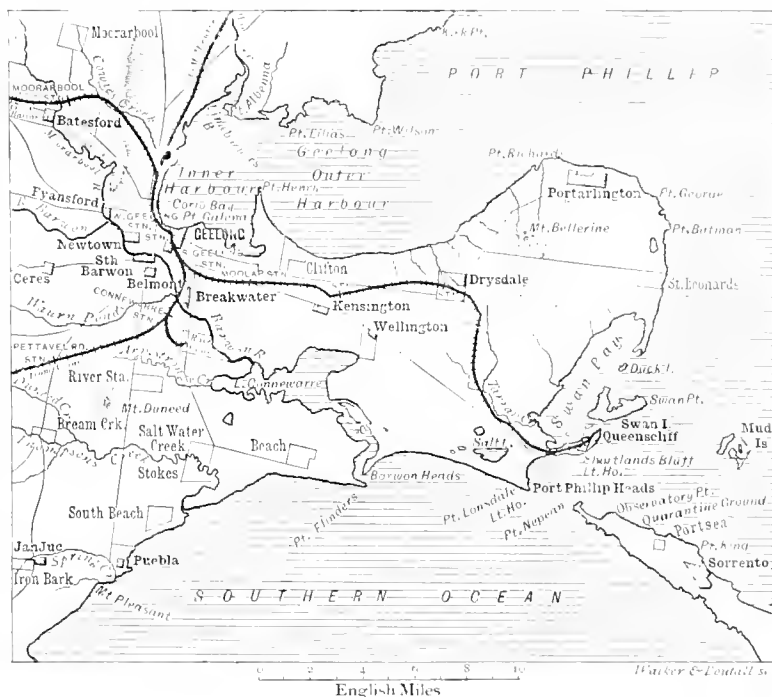
Following the ridge to the east and north, the traveller descends upon Geelong, which is situated on the gently sloping hills which line this portion of Corio Bay. The town has the Bay for its northern, and the Barwon for its southern boundary, and thus possesses good natural drainage, an advantage which few Australian towns can be said to have. Corio Bay is a fine natural harbour some twelve miles in circumference. The Yon Yongs, which rise to the north-west of it, bear some resemblance to Vesuvius in shape, and the intense blue of the Bay has often given rise to a not inapt comparison with the Bay of Naples.

As one passes to the eastward beyond Corio Bay the land trends somewhat to the north, and the miocene rock again appears. Further to the east the miocene overlies carboniferous rocks, which have been bored for coal, but without result. The northern coast of the Geelong peninsula is elevated some 200 feet above the waters of Port Phillip Bay; and it is a noteworthy fact that a volcanic formation consisting of an older basalt than is found on the Werribee plains occurs along this coast. To the decomposition of this basalt is due the rich soil of the Bellerine hills and other parts of the northern part of the peninsula. Four or five miles from Queenscliff, which is on the extreme east of the peninsula, extensive estuary deposits occur, which abound in recent shells. Near Point Lonsdale, and a few miles from Queenscliff, is a salt lake, which at a recent period was well stocked with oysters, as is

proved by the existence of a large kitchen-midden formed at this place by the aborigines. The land in the centre of the peninsula from Queenscliff to Wallington, a distance of eleven miles, is very poor, and is covered by stunted gum, wattle, grass, and heath. It is mainly pleiocene, of a sandy ferruginous character.

Nine miles from Queenscliff the river Barwon flows into the ocean, and, like most Australian rivers, is impeded by a bar which renders navigation impossible. As the crow flies it is twelve miles from Geelong to the outlet of the Barwon, but the river channel is about twenty-one miles in length. Leaving Geelong, the river traverses alluvial flats, some of which are very richly grassed; and it may be remarked in passing, that some of the best racing stock of the colony has been bred on the banks of the Barwon. Before entering the sea, the river flows through a chain of lakes known by the general name of Lake Connemare, an aboriginal title, doubtless formed from the sound of the black swans as they rise in thousands from the water. On the southern side of the peninsula a line of sand-hummocks borders the ocean, and on the landward side of these yellow dunes is found a thick undergrowth of ti-tree (*melaleuca*) and honeysuckle, which in early spring, when covered by the silvery clematis, presents a charming appearance. It is impossible to imagine anything more exhilarating than the air in this barren strip of coast, and it is not surprising that the people of Geelong are fond of trips to the small creeks which run into the ocean here, and in which good bream fishing can be obtained.

New country as Australia is, it is no easy task to obtain authentic information as to the early days of the colonies. But it seems certain that the first white man who stood on the present site of Geelong was the convict Buckley, whose strange career is well described in Mr. Labillière's history of Victoria. He lived for some time at Indented Heads, a point on the north-eastern part of the peninsula, and in company with his native friends he made a journey of 100 miles from that spot to the westward. The settlement of Geelong appears to have been made immediately subsequent

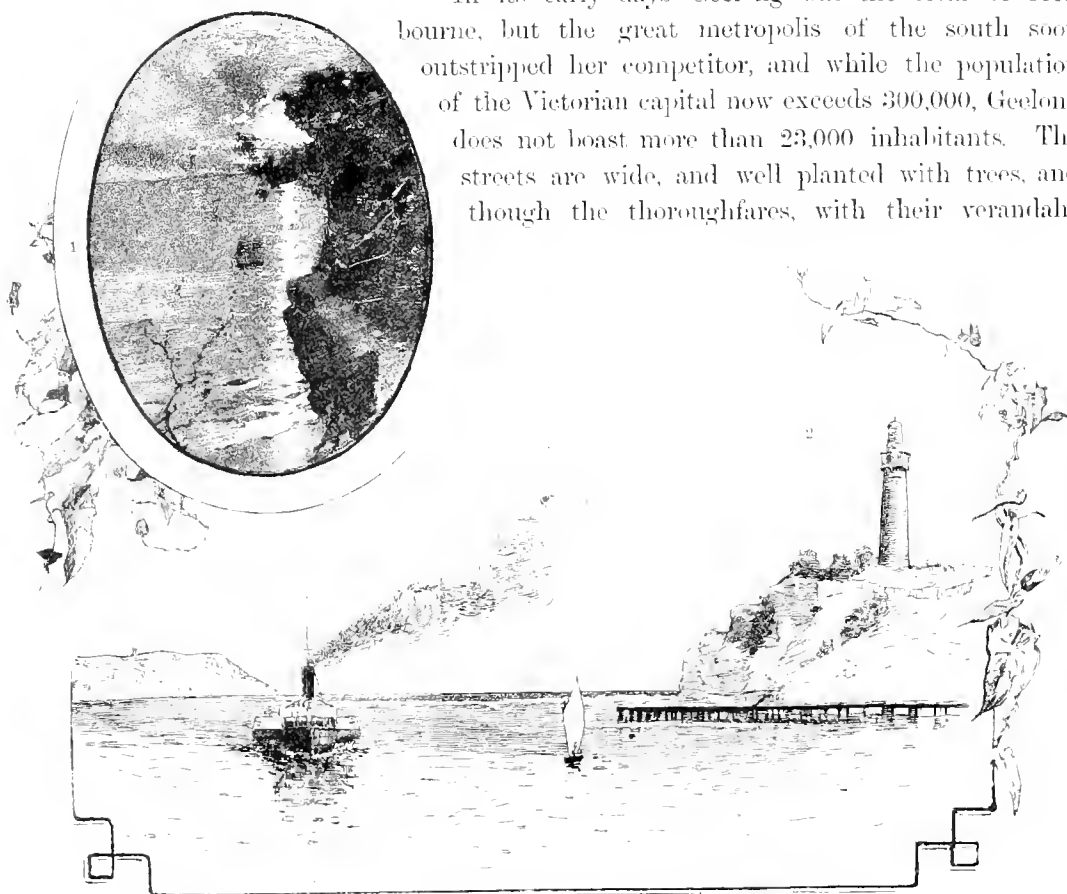


MAP OF THE GEELONG DISTRICT.

to that of Melbourne in 1836, for in 1837 we find that at the request of the settlers a police magistrate and a small force of constabulary were appointed "to the Geelong district, Port Phillip."

The situation of Geelong is, without controversy, admirable. It stands upon the low hills on the western arm of Port Phillip Bay, and is the natural outlet and port of that true Australia Felix, the western district of Victoria. There are, indeed, few towns in the whole of Australia or in New Zealand that are more picturesque. From the top of New Town hill the visitor can see on the south, over the grey-green landscape intersected by the silver ribbon of the Barwon, the flash of the southern ocean; to the north lies Corio Bay, its azure waters providing a feast for the eye: immediately below is spread the town, whose white-walled houses are set off by a plentiful wealth of greenery. To the north-east, beyond Melbourne, lie the Dandenong Ranges; directly north the dividing Range, capped by Mount Macedon, looms on the blue horizon; while to the north-west can be descried Mount Buninyong, the volcanic peak which is the warder of the gold metropolis, Ballarat. Truly a noble sight seen under the lustrous canopy of Australian skies.

In its early days Geelong was the rival of Melbourne, but the great metropolis of the south soon outstripped her competitor, and while the population of the Victorian capital now exceeds 300,000, Geelong does not boast more than 23,000 inhabitants. The streets are wide, and well planted with trees, and though the thoroughfares, with their verandahs



1. PORT PHILLIP HEADS BY MOONLIGHT.

2. PORT PHILLIP LIGHTHOUSE.

and irregular-sized shops and buildings, are quite unlike our English streets, they make a picturesque show, especially as the sea is ever and anon coming into sight, as at Malta or Genoa. The place is well supplied with churches, although it is a noticeable fact that none of them have fine spires. The Church of England has three places of worship, one of which—Christ Church—looks as if it had been bodily transferred from some English country parish. St. Paul's possesses the only peal of bells in the town. The Roman Catholics have two churches, one of which—St. Mary and St. Peter's—has a fine rose window, and promises to be the most



GEELONG.

striking ecclesiastical edifice in Geelong. There are also six Presbyterian, ten Wesleyan, four Baptist, and several other churches. The Convent of Mercy, with its beautiful chapel and buildings, is one of the ornaments of the town. Turning from ecclesiastical to secular edifices, we may mention the Town Hall, the Chamber of Commerce, and the banks, the majority of them built of the fine brown sandstone from the adjacent Barrabool hills. At least three banks have fine buildings, whose exteriors much surpass those of the banking firms in Lombard Street. The central point of the town is the market square, which contains a not inelegant clock-tower, surmounted by the omnipresent kangaroo, and also a theatre, with which are combined assembly-rooms and a gymnasium.

The staples of Geelong trade are wool, wheat, and leather, and the value of the exports for 1884 was £1,151,430. There are three jetties in Corio Bay, alongside which full-sized ships can lie, and, as a railway from the western district and another from Ballarat meet in the town, a considerable amount of wool and grain finds its way direct from Geelong to the London market. Perhaps of more importance than this trade is that of the wool-manufacturing industry, whose mills are situated on the banks of the Barwon. These were started under the Protective system, and were the first woollen mills in operation in Victoria. At present there are four at work, and they do a large business. The principal articles produced are blankets, shawls, and

tweeds. The Geelong woollens, being made of pure wool, are known for their durability, and have a wide sale throughout Victoria and the adjacent colonies. The woollen mills, which still enjoy "Protection," though of a very moderate amount, are nevertheless heavily handicapped, for the raw material is but slightly cheaper than in England, while labour, fuel, and machinery are all dear; moreover, the colonial material has to compete with the cheap shoddy of English and German manufacturers. Under these circumstances the mills are demanding increased Protection, and they agree in asking Government for a duty on the weight of woollen imports, and not, as heretofore, for an *ad valorem* duty. The consumers, however, and slop-manufacturers, do not find it to their interest to agree to this change. To political economists, the condition of these establishments is of extreme interest, as they owe their genesis to the dictum of John Stuart Mill that, in a young country, temporary Protection is a justifiable policy. They give employment to five hundred hands or more, and of course indirectly to many others.

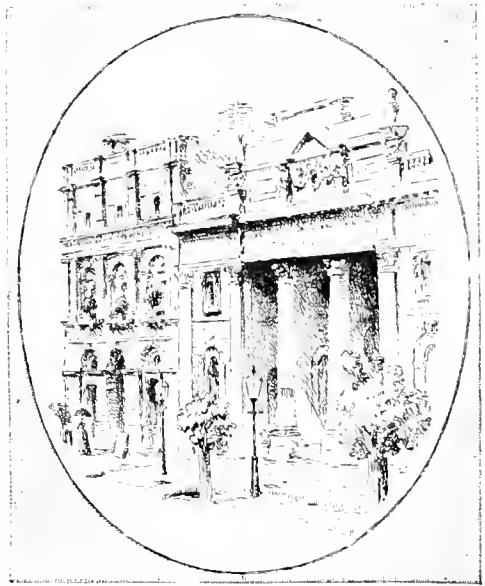
The town also possesses several large tanneries, fellmongeries, and wool-washing works; and it may be mentioned that at Batesford, not far from the town, are the largest paper-mills in the Southern hemisphere. Geelong is also the seat of some very successful rope and agricultural-implement manufactories. In speaking of the industries of Geelong, reference must be made to the unfortunate condition of the vigneron. The slopes of the Barrabool hills are eminently suited for viticulture, and until quite recently large numbers of vineyards were in existence in the neighbourhood of the town. The appearance, however, of the dreaded *Phylloxera vastatrix* made it absolutely necessary to exterminate all the vines in the district, and, though some compensation has been made to the vignerons, the operation of the Phylloxera Act has been ruinous to most owners. It cannot be doubted, however, that the general interests of Australia have been subserved by the energetic measures which the Victorian Government in this case adopted.

The healthy situation of Geelong, and the facilities afforded for sea-bathing, have made it a favoured spot, and consequently there are many handsome and well-appointed houses in the town and suburbs. Educational requirements are well looked after. In the town and suburbs are numerous State schools, whose pupils have been eminently successful in the University examinations, while the Church of England Grammar School and the Geelong College may be mentioned among schools of a higher grade. The former, in constitution and working, is modelled on the lines of the great English public schools. As a proof of the mental and physical standard to which this school has attained, it may be stated that one of its pupils has recently obtained an open scholarship at Oxford, and stood well in the examination for the Ireland scholarship, while in 1886 old oarsmen of the school were rowing in both the Oxford and Cambridge Eights. The school possesses buildings well adapted for educational purposes—a school library and museum, together with a gymnasium, a rifle corps, a school paper, cricket, football, bicycle, lawn-tennis, and fives clubs, and a boat club, from which have come no less than seven University oars in the course of the last ten years. The head-master is a Cambridge

man, J. Braeebridge Wilson, of St. John's College, and to his efforts during the last quarter of a century the present high status of the school is due. While the people of Geelong have reason to be satisfied with the commercial progress of their town, it is a matter for deeper congratulation that on soil where forty years ago gum-trees waved and aboriginals camped, there should now be standing institutions which perpetuate the best traditions of English school life. The town, by the way, possesses one weekly and two daily newspapers; one of the latter—the *Advertiser*—has been in existence for nearly half a century.

The Botanical Gardens, which border Corio Bay, are laid out with good taste, for the Board of Management has had the sense to preserve the native flora, and the beautiful wattle has not been foolishly removed to make way for deciduous English trees, which for eight months in the year cannot but present a melancholy aspect. In the Botanical Gardens are the ponds of the Fish Acclimatisation Society, which has done good service by introducing English trout and other fish into the lakes and rivers of the Western District. There are two other parks in Geelong, and a Government reserve about two miles from the town, very beautiful, both in its natural character and in its position.

The water supply is obtained from three reservoirs, situated at distances of six, twenty-three, and twenty-seven miles from the town and a further supply has been obtained by tapping the Eastern Moorabool, which adds 129 million gallons yearly to the total. The average yearly consumption of water in Geelong is 200 million gallons, and as the storage capacity of the different reservoirs amounts to 500 million gallons, there is a fair margin of reserve against ordinary droughts. The average rainfall in the districts where the catchment area of the reservoirs is situated was a trifle over eighteen inches during a period of six years.



SAVINGS BANK AND FREE LIBRARY.

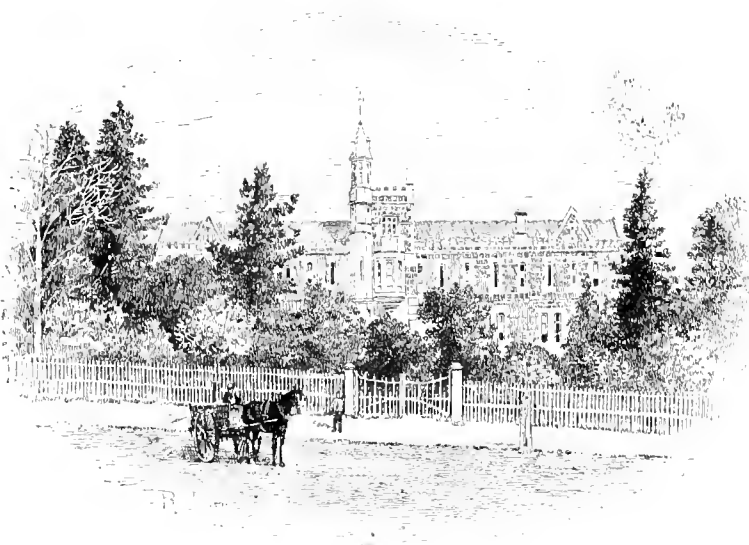
The visitor will find the people of Geelong very hospitable and social. Like other Australians, they are fond of holidays, and delight in the open air and in athletic exercises. A good football match always attracts crowds of people, who follow the fortunes of the game with an enthusiasm such as may have characterised the Greeks at an Olympian "meeting." For the benefit of English football players, it may be stated that the Victorian football is a combination of the Rugby and the Association game, and when well played is perhaps as interesting a form of athletic contest as the ingenuity of man has yet devised.

A common nickname of the town seems to call for a short explanation. In their patriotic ardour for the new settlement the first inhabitants dubbed their town "The

Pivot," fondly believing that it would become the first city of Victoria; and there are those who still hold that if the earlier settlers had possessed sufficient enterprise and foresight, they might, by borrowing half a million, have cut the bar and secured much of the Melbourne shipping trade. Though early hopes were not realised, it affords satisfaction to the inhabitants of Melbourne and Ballarat to keep up the *sobriquet*. The name Geelong was originally applied by the natives to Port Phillip and Corio Bays, while Corio was the aboriginal name of the ground where the town of Geelong now stands. The ground was sold to Batman by the natives, for a consideration of which beads and old muskets seem to have formed the main part.

Having added that Geelong was incorporated as a town in 1849, and has a

Corporation Act of its own, and that it can also boast of aldermen, a species of civic dignity known in few other Australian towns, we turn now to consider the places in the neighbourhood. Passing to the eastward, the visitor comes to the small town of Drysdale, situated about ten miles from Geelong, at a height of 200 feet above Port Phillip Bay. The district is agricultural, and the land very fertile. Some of it brings



GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

from £30 to £35 an acre. About a mile from the township are situated the Clifton Springs, which are strongly impregnated with iron, magnesia, and sulphur. A scheme is as present on foot to establish at Clifton an Australian spa, and there is every probability of its being carried into effect. The population of Drysdale is between 300 and 400.

Some five or six miles further east, on the shores of Port Phillip Bay, is the township of Portarlington. Here also the land is exceedingly fertile; and Portarlington, with a population of 700, is a thriving little place. There are fine views from the heights, and as the bathing is good, many visitors find their way here in summer.

Queenscliff is situated to the extreme east of the Geelong peninsula, on a neck of land known as Shortland's Bluff. The higher part of the town stands on limestone, and as it is almost surrounded by sea, and looks through the Port Phillip Heads to the open straits, it is one of the healthiest spots in Australia. Large hotels have sprung up in

Queenscliff, which, like Brighton in England, and other seaside places, has a regular season in the summer, when the hot winds drive folks from Melbourne to cooler resorts. Queenscliff is also a great place for fishing, and is one of the sources from which comes the Melbourne supply. Residents, indeed, often complain that they cannot purchase fish because all that is caught is sent away to the capital. The baths are exceedingly good, and have been surrounded by a shark-proof fence. The resident population is about 1,500, but this number is largely increased when the hotels are filled by "resident aliens." The Anglican stone church of St. George, though of no



GEELONG FROM THE BOTANICAL GARDENS.

great dimensions, is well proportioned, and contains fine stained-glass windows. Noticeable among the other buildings are the two lighthouses, so placed that when seen from seaward in line they form a leading line for vessels entering. The width of Port Phillip Heads between Point Nepean on the east and Port Lonsdale on the west is about 4,000 yards, but only about 1,600 yards of this distance is navigable, namely, the channel called "The Rip," through which the tide runs with great velocity. Those who have been on the sea between the islands of Jura and Scarba on the one side and the coast of Scotland on the other when a strong tide is setting from the westward, will be able to form an idea of "The Rip."

Queenscliff, standing at the gate of Victoria, is naturally the centre of the colonial system of defence, and a brief account of the works in the neighbourhood may be given. The central fort sweeps the whole entrance to the bay, and ships

would be exposed to its fire for four miles down the bay, even supposing them to have successfully passed the front of the battery. The armament of the upper fort of the Queenscliff battery consists of three nine-inch muzzle-loading rifled guns of twelve and a half tons weight; while the lower fort is provided with four eighty-pounder muzzle-loading rifled guns of four tons weight. This armament has been increased by a nine-inch gun, mounted on a hydro-pneumatic disappearing carriage. On Point Nepean, immediately commanding "The Rip" from the opposite shore, is a powerful battery, armed with nine-inch and eighty-pounder guns. At Swan Island, two miles from Queenscliff, inside the bay, is another powerful battery, mounted as at Queenscliff. The South Channel and Frankston batteries command the South Channel, the only water-way practicable for a large man-of-war. In addition to these defences, there is a completely matured scheme of torpedoes, lines of which would be speedily laid in the channel in the event of war breaking out between Great Britain and any Power likely to cause trouble to the colonies. There is a detachment of the Victorian Permanent Artillery always stationed at Queenscliff, and, on the whole, it may be affirmed that hostile visitors would find Port Phillip Heads—defended as they are by ironclads, torpedoes, torpedo-launches, and powerful batteries—a very ugly place to tackle. Queenscliff, moreover, is connected by rail with Geelong and Melbourne, so that it would be easy to throw a large body of troops into the town in a very short time.

The village of Kensington, situated about eight miles from Geelong on the slopes above Lake Connemare, is well adapted for the growth of fruit-trees; and in September, when the wattle is in full bloom, and the fruit-gardens are covered with white and pink blossoms, this spot is well worth a visit.

In conclusion, it may be mentioned that the whole lower valley of the Barwon is of recent formation, as is attested by the great number of marine shells which are to be found on the flats near its banks; and that at Spring Creek, sixteen miles from Geelong, facing the ocean and partly covered at high tide, is a miocene cliff 145 feet in height, one of the most remarkable instances in the world of this class of formation. The cliff is rich in fossils, and makes the heart of the geologist leap for joy.

SPRINGFIELD TO THE WEST COAST.

Old-fashioned Travelling—The Southern Alps—Castle Hill—The Waimakariri River and Gorge—The Rolleston
Glaciers—Bealey Gorge—The Devil's Punch Bowl—Arthur's Pass—New Zealand Flowers and Birds—
The Kea—The Otira Gorge and River.

CONSIDERED merely as a piece of perilous and sensational coach-driving, the ride from Springfield to the West Coast of New Zealand is an experience in travelling which even a jaded sightseer may venture upon with reasonable hopes of finding something stimulating and fresh, and this altogether apart from the delicious clearness and buoyancy of the atmosphere, the impressive grandeur of the scenery, and the constant succession of interesting roadside details which appeal to the intelligence and the artistic sensibilities of every traveller. The day is coming—it is now within measurable distance—when this glorious journey will be made under other conditions than those now possible: when we shall be rushed in a few hours over the distance that now takes two whole days: when, instead of pleasantly, if laboriously toiling up mountain roads after panting horses, we shall be carried under the mountains by panting engines: to bring about which unhappy consummation Otira Gorge will be scored with ugly railway embankments, and miles of virgin forest will be laid waste. Meanwhile, however, and for a few years yet to come, this journey must be made in leisurely fashion, by coach, or on horseback, or afoot. At present the railway reaches no further than the western verge of the Canterbury Plain, over which one is only too thankful to be carried at railway speed. The coach that plies between this point and Hokitika, on the West Coast, is one of those lumbering structures hung on leather springs which, when you come to try them, turn out so much better than they look. It is drawn by a team of five strong, well-fed horses: and, given fine weather, robust health, and a box-seat, no more lively or agreeable style of travelling could be desired.

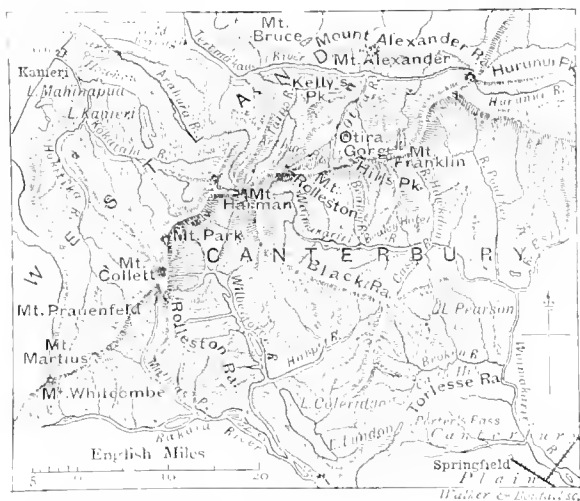
The Southern Alps are entered at once—at first great rolling, brown, tussocky hills, scored with damp, grass-covered gullies, and cropped by thriving sheep. As the coach toils the spiral ascent towards Porter's Pass (so called after a surveyor of the name), one has an opportunity of realising how much depends on the docility of the horses and the skill and coolness of the driver. On the left is a steep clay cutting, above which the mountain slopes away to a crest hundreds of feet overhead, whilst on the right the hillside dips at a sharp angle down to the bottom of a gully, where the sheep grow small in perspective. And how easy is it to imagine horses and coach rolling down to the bottom of the ravine!

The telegraph-post at the top of Porter's Pass stands at a higher elevation than any other in New Zealand. From this point the coach descends at a spanking pace into the valley, at the bottom of which, to the left of the road, lies the little lake or tarn of Linden, formed by the drainage from the surrounding hills. It cannot be called a pretty lake. The water is dull in colour, and its shores are naked and desolate,

destitute of shrubs or trees; nor are there traces of animal life, unless, perhaps, a stray sheep or a vagrant seagull. The mountains that rise up on either hand at this part of the route are in their way very grand. They generally taper to the top with a tolerably uniform gradient. The lower parts are covered with coarse, yellow herbage, mostly of tussock and wild Spaniard. The pinnacles into which the summits are split, and which are exposed to the constant action of severe weather-extremes, have been gradually shattered into myriads of fragments, which descend the mountain sides in greyish masses, like banks of screenings from some gigantic stone-crusher; while the jagged edges of the mountain-top stand out from the sliding mass of disintegrated rubbish, to be subjected in their turn to the pulverising action of heat and frost.

Though the mountain scenery on this, the first part of the route, does not present the combination of grandeur and

beauty which makes the fascination of the journey further on, yet the interest is continually stimulated by the singular configuration of the valley, the succession of lake and stream, shingle-bed, tussock-flat, river-terrace, and isolated boulders. On approaching the farm of Castle Hill, attention is attracted to what looks like the ruins of some castle or fortress built of huge cyclopean blocks of limestone. Fancy easily traces the square or rounded outline of buttress and turret, and the resemblance is strengthened by patches of such parasitic vegetable growths as love to creep over old ruins. Apart



MAP SHOWING ROAD FROM SPRINGFIELD TO THE WEST COAST.

from the general mass are isolated boulders lying scattered about like a flock at rest. They are of all sizes, and of the most fantastic shapes, suggesting that at some time long ago some antediluvian herd of monsters had been suddenly turned into stone. Lying, as they do there, bleaching in the sun, and bearing their suggestions of a life now extinct, those limestone boulders strangely add to the loneliness of this wilderness. There is, of course, nothing artificial about them; they are the result of a process of denudation, which has carried away the softer and looser substances round them, and of a process of weathering, which has rounded the blocks into a variety of curious and fantastic shapes.

Craigieburn Station, with its willows and its paddocks, situated on a lakelet called Lake Pearson, is welcomed as an oasis in the sterile region which we are traversing. After passing the Cass, a lonely accommodation house not far from the Wainiakariri river, the route entirely changes its aspect. The mountains still continue, but instead of presenting a burnt and yellow surface, they are shaggy with forest, and spring from the edge of a magnificent river channel, rising peak beyond peak, till at

last the eye rests on the Rolleston glaciers and the snow-capped summits of the Rolleston Range, flushed with the pink afterglow of sunset. Like the other large rivers of the middle island of New Zealand, the Waimakariri (icy river) is formed from melted snow and ice, and has consequently being as yet undefiled by gold-mining operations, that pellucid greenish-blue peculiar to glacier rivers. At the place where the West Coast road strikes the Waimakariri, the bed of the stream is very broad, an enormous expanse of shingle lying between high banks, with a narrow thread—and, in



CASTLE HILL.

some places, a network—of clear water running in its deeper channels. In flood-time the whole bed is covered with a large volume of water, but at midsummer the river, as seen from the elevation of its high bank, looks a mere rivulet in comparison with the width of its channel, and only when one has to ford it with horses does he realise how strong and swift is the Waimakariri even in summer. In former days the road used to run for some considerable distance along the bed of the river, but a cutting has since been made round the Waimakariri Bluff, and the coach now has to follow a series of sharp curves on a shelf in the rock, at some considerable height above the river.

With reference to this part of the route, we will quote the graphic, if somewhat exaggerated description of his experiences in the Waimakariri Gorge written by

the much-travelled Archibald Forbes:—"We had lost time somewhere, and the short southern gloaming was about us, when the driver quietly muttered, as we turned sharply round a corner, 'I don't like the Waimakariri Gorge after sundown.' It is with every emphasis that I record my assent to this expression; and yet, when it was all over, I was not sorry that the experience had befallen us. We went at a hand-gallop on a track just wide enough, and no more, for our three leaders abreast. About 500 feet sheer below—sheer, except in places where the cruel, jagged crags reared their horrid heads—roared and boiled the furious torrent of the Waimakariri River. One could just discern through the gathering gloom the deep blackness of sullen, gloomy pool, alternating with the dingy white of the tortured rapids, writhing their vexed course through the rocks that impeded the river-bed. Above us towered a beetling crag wall as high, where the eye could catch its sky-line, as the drop on the side next the river was deep. But this was only in places; for the most part it actually overhung us, and the narrow road was notched out of its looming face. It overhung worst at the sharp bends of the road, as it followed the curves, the projections, and the indentations of that serrated precipice. Not once, but often, the leaders, as they galloped round a turn, were clean out of sight, and there was but the point of the pole projecting over the profound, ere as yet the wheelers, urged close to the verge that the wheels might clear the protecting buttress, complied with the sharp bend, borne round on their haunches by the driver's strong left arm. His attention was concentrated on his work; but once he spoke, and I would rather he had held his tongue: 'Do you see those dim white specks on the flat top of that crag below us? Those are the bleached bones of some horses. They were pasturing on the upland above us, when a sudden scare sent them over the precipice. They fell clear outside the road without touching it, and brought up where you see their bones down there.'" This superlative description of the terrors of the Waimakariri Gorge, as experienced by Mr. Forbes, leaves nothing more stirring to be said of the far more terrible descent of the Otira Gorge.

Even in the height of summer, the coach drive up the Waimakariri is generally done in the gathering darkness. Seen in the full sunlight, the magnificent stretch of river, forest, and mountain is impressive, but not less impressive when the gloom of night begins to blur the distinctness of its outline and fill up the ravines and valleys with masses of black shadow. And if, as sometimes happens, a bush-fire is raging on the wooded slopes of the valley, the shooting flames and rolling clouds of smoke add an element of the terrible to the gloomy grandeur.

On the Waimakariri, at the foot of the wooded range that forms its right bank, is the Bealey Hotel, an old-fashioned house of accommodation, which gives fairly comfortable night-quarters to travellers journeying to or from the west coast. From the beauty of its surroundings the Bealey Hotel is a desirable stopping-place; and the neighbourhood of the Rolleston Glaciers makes it worth while to sojourn a day or two in this locality. The glaciers lie towards the sources of the river, about fourteen miles from the Bealey Hotel. The way runs along a bridle-track, which frequently crosses the river, and reaches to within two miles of the glaciers. "As you ride up in

THE BEAVER RIVER.



some places," says the correspondent of a London newspaper, "the mountains rise sheer above you, and you can gaze sheer down a thousand feet or more into the torrent below. To the right above you lies one glacier of pure blue ice, as pure as that in the Rosenlain Glacier, but this is supported from falling by three huge tower-like projections of rock, between which run huge *couloirs*, down which stones are being constantly precipitated. One can, if a fair climber, get up to the foot of the glacier, but it would require ropes and ice-axes to venture upon it, as the front is very precipitous, and there are large crevices on the surface. The broken and castellated peaks which rise from the glacier above the rock wall, and prevent it from slipping down, are magnificent, and quite unlike anything else I have ever seen. Those at the top of the valley are more covered with snow, and therefore less striking; but the long stretches of snow-clad ice are, from their vastness, an object of sufficient wonder."

Nearly opposite to the hotel the river is joined on its left bank by the tributary stream which gives the house its name, the Bealey. Two rivers unite to form the tributary before it joins the main stream, and it is up the western branch of the Bealey that the road to the west coast lies. In the earliest daylight whilst, even in summer, the air is yet chilly and raw, the coach makes its way across the river. The road marked out by pilot-posts lies across the shingle-bed for more than a mile, and, though the river itself is here divided into two channels, the horses require to step warily and steadily into its cold, swift waters. In flood the Waimakariri must want a strong and skilful arm to pilot a team of five over its fords.

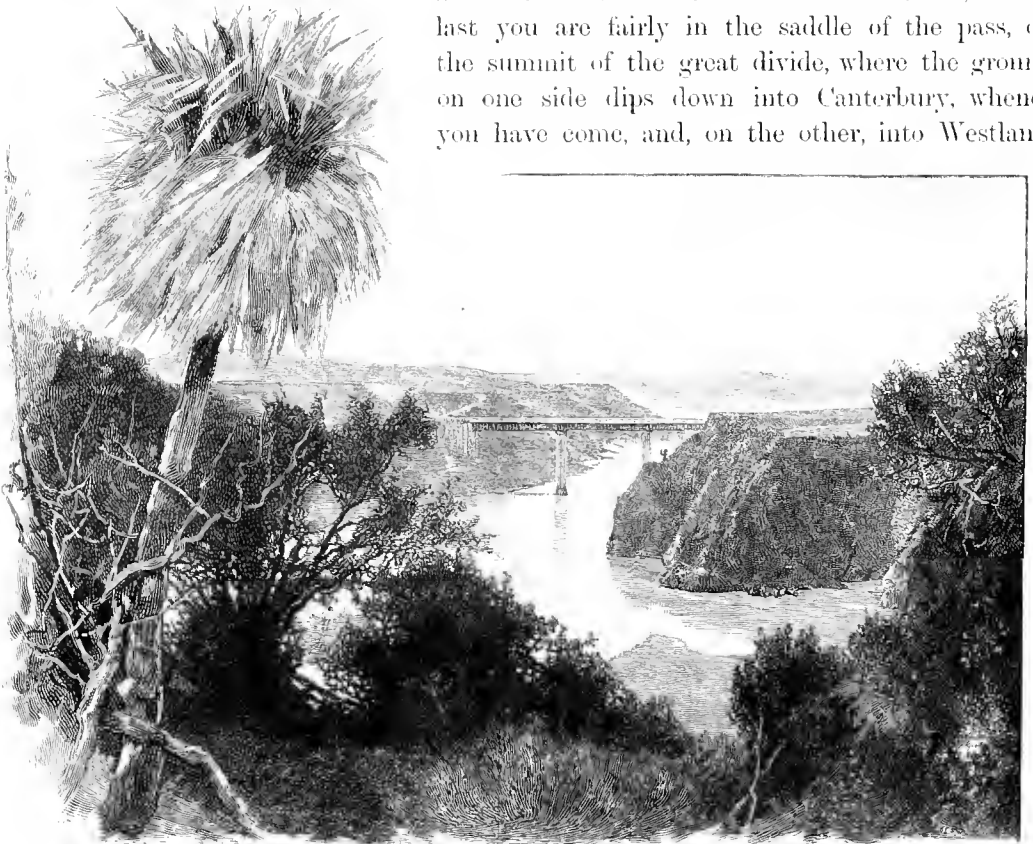
Presently the coach-road enters the Bealey Gorge. For a large part of the way it runs along the shingle bed of the stream, which, when not in flood, is of trifling dimensions. The road, such as it is, crosses and recrosses the stream several times before it finally makes up its mind to choose the right bank. The breadth of the Bealey Valley is too great to justify its being called a "gorge." Right and left the wooded sides of the valley rise to a great height—magnificent slopes of forest, for the most part of the sombre New Zealand beech, but lighted up with patches of brighter green, and with brilliant blotches of crimson mistletoe. Unless seen near at hand, this mistletoe, or *Loranthus*, would be mistaken for the crimson rata that colour the slopes on the western side of the watershed. It is, however, a true parasite, living on a species of beech: a handsome tree, with a tabular arrangement of branches, and heavy masses of dark foliage. This beech ascends the pass to the tree limit, and gives place on the other side to the scarlet-blossoming rata, and another species of beech. Indeed, nothing on this route is more wonderful than the line of division formed by the range between the kinds of vegetation, more particularly in respect of forest trees.

Away on the left side of the Bealey may be seen the white column of a waterfall, which spouts out from a cleft in the mountain, and tumbles down the sheer face of a precipice into the basins visible only on reaching its edge. The lower part of the mountain face, down which this cataract pours, is shaggy with a growth of stunted beech; and in the background of the gap in the mountain from which the water issues rise the snowy ranges which feed the fall. With the usual tendency to credit what is fearful in nature to the principle of evil, this waterfall and its cauldron have been

called "The Devil's Punch Bowl." Although New Zealand has no waterfall of any great volume, except perhaps the Huka Falls, on the Waikato, it may be called the country of cascades, so numerous are the small falls of water consequent upon the rains and snows of its mountains. In the neighbourhood of the Bealey and Otira Gorges' waterfalls—perennial or occasional—are plentiful enough, though few of them have the height or volume of the "Devil's Punch Bowl." Near the pretty wooden bridge at the head of the valley, where the ascent of Arthur's Pass commences in earnest, two irregular cascades drop their tracery of foam like streamers of lace over the rock-work. They fall side by side, and are called "The Twins."

No one can ascend the Bealey River without being sorry to leave its beauties behind; but the knowledge of the grandeur soon to come makes one eager to ascend the steep mountain road leading to Arthur's Pass, amidst trees and shrubs and flowers that give fresh delight at every step. But the trees grow fewer and fewer,

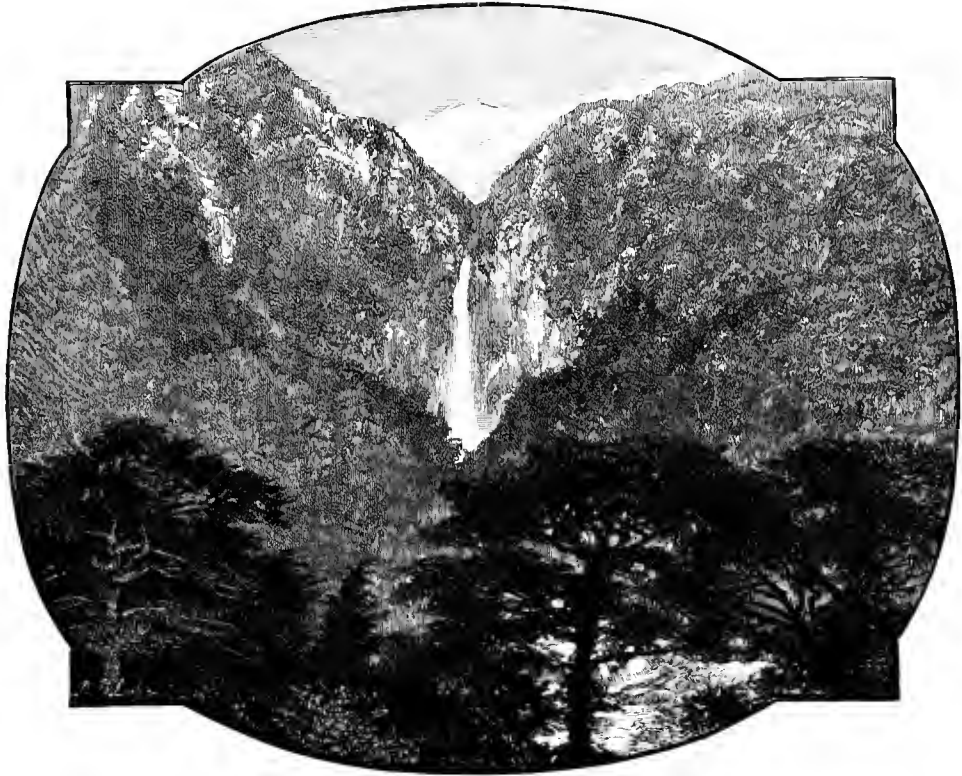
and the flowers more and more numerous, till at last you are fairly in the saddle of the pass, on the summit of the great divide, where the ground on one side dips down into Canterbury, whence you have come, and, on the other, into Westland,



THE WAIMAKARIRI GORGE.

whither you are going. The charm, the fascination of Arthur's Pass, is not to be expressed in words. The great barren mountains sweep up on either side in magnificent curves to the snow-line, pouring down from their riven crags overwhelming streams of crushed

débris. Along the bottom and sides of the pass lie fields of boulders rent from the neighbouring mountains. The dull thuds of a waterfall high up the side of the pass, borne intermittently on the breeze, have a startling effect, like the sound of distant



THE DEVIL'S PUNCH BOWL, BEALEY GORGE.

guns. Towards the west end, on the face of a mountain which descends into a deep and densely-wooded gorge at its foot, is the Otira Glacier, showing steeply sloping or perpendicular walls of snow and ice, divided in places by gaping fissures. Though this glacier is not large, and is really a considerable distance from anyone standing in Arthur's Pass, its ice-green colour and the texture of its surface may be very distinctly seen in certain states of the atmosphere. The lowest part of the trough of Arthur's Pass is of varied surface: here, fields of large boulders piled one on the other in magnificent confusion; there, mounds of vegetation, shrubs, and flowers, or stretches of long grass, tussock, and toi-toi, mixed with clumps of flax; and, again not the least striking feature, bogs of black peat and stagnant pools of brown water, affording suitable conditions of growth for many sorts of interesting bog-plants. Here and there the pass is fretted with water-courses—the clearest and freshest of streams, tumbling down the faces of boulders or over beds of brown pebbles, disappearing and reappearing in the most charming way under banks of shrubs and flowers. This omnipresence of water is one of the most notable characteristics of the middle island of New

Zealand—that which, more than any other, perhaps, delights the visitor from one of the less copiously watered Australian colonies. Wherever he travels, he finds the road crossed at frequent intervals by streams of clear and cool water. This is due to the valuable water-condensing apparatus which the island possesses in its lofty mountain-axis. Of course, the higher up one mounts, the smaller and more numerous and purer do the streams become.

Standing on Arthur's Pass, one has an excellent opportunity of observing the division of water into two large river systems. Two streams within stone's-throw of each other, on the point, one would think, of joining their waters, are diverted in their course by a low mound or moraine-heap; and so the one descends the slope to reach the Pacific on the east coast by the Waimakariri, whilst the other descends to the west coast by the Teremakau. Towards the western end of Arthur's Pass is a little brown tarn called "Lake Lonely;" and lonely enough it certainly is, lying there in its tract of oozy, marshy ground, overgrown with rank grasses, through which the peaty stream that feeds it slowly makes its way. There is no visible outlet to the tarn, the water finding its way, no doubt, through some underground channel into the Otira river.

But, with all its impressive grandeur, what would Arthur's Pass be without its flowers? As if to show how tender she can be as well as strong, Nature has made the most delicate and exquisite of flowers to spring up among the rocks hurled from her mountain tops; not merely her coarse and stunted growths, which are there too, but the delicate, filmy fronds of fern, and flower-cups of pure white, which look too soft and fragile to be touched by other than the dainty fingers of a fairy. There are mountain daisies of several kinds, all white—some with prim little flowers shining like a newly-coined sixpence, and others less stiff in petal and with discs as broad as a teacup. Not their smallest glory is their leaves—some bold and large, and others arranged in small rosettes, like marriage favours cut from silvery-grey satin. But the glory of the pass, acknowledged queen of New Zealand flowers wherever it is found, is the Mount Cook or Shepherd's Lily—no lily at all, but a buttercup (*Ranunculus lyalli*). It is difficult to say whether the foliage or the flower of this lovely mountain buttercup is the more charming. A vigorous plant, it stands about three feet high. The young leaf, thick and fleshy, is like a small shield, but as it matures its upper surface becomes concave, till the leaf forms a perfect goblet, which may be found, after a shower, filled to the brim with water. Above the leaves rise the numerous flowers, of the most lustrous white, with a yellow disc of stamens at the bottom of each cup—truly an imperial flower when you see its massive foliage crowned with its pure and stately bloom. On Arthur's Pass Nature is as lavish with this flower as in less-favoured places with her docks. At first it seems to grow indiscriminately wherever there is foothold; but if you observe more closely, you will see that it prefers the slope of a bank away from the sun, where it can send its roots down amidst the moss into the moist grit. Notwithstanding the desire of tourists to transplant the Shepherd's Lily from the gritty soil and pure air of its mountain home to the heavier soil and atmosphere of city gardens, there are

still large and vigorous colonies of the plant by the wayside. But if the pillage goes on, Arthur's Pass will lose one of its most lovely attractions, whilst the city gardens will not be much the richer, for not one plant in twenty that is carried away is successfully cultivated.

What makes the solitude of Arthur's Pass after a time almost unbearable is the absence of animal life. There is not even the bleat of a sheep to give one some suggestion of companionship. One bird indeed lets itself be seen and heard, for it seems to have found here the conditions favourable to its existence. This is the kea parrot, one of the most extraordinary of New Zealand birds. You will probably be first made aware of its near neighbourhood by hearing a piercing scream like the much exaggerated mew of a cat, and when you track the sound home you will find it to proceed from a pretty large brownish-green parrot (*Nestor notabilis*) known to settlers as the "kea." These parrots give every opportunity of watching their curious motions, for one may approach almost near enough to them to be able to knock them over with a stick. The natural food of this bird consists of berries, and the honey of such flowers as the flax and the rata. But of late years it has developed quite a new taste for sheep's kidneys, a taste acquired in the first instance when the bird was driven down by the rigour of winter to the neighbourhood of stations, and found the offal of the meat-gallows to be palatable food. From eating dead meat it proceeded to attack the living sheep, selecting the kidney as the point of attack. In certain parts of Otago, station-holders now look to losing a number of sheep yearly by the kea, and they are consequently active in its destruction. In Arthur's Pass, from the absence of flocks in the neighbourhood, the kea has not yet developed its murderous instinct.

About half-way through the pass stands a large post which marks the boundary between the provincial districts of Canterbury and Westland. The Otira Gorge, by which the descent is made from the pass towards the Westland coast, is a deep and narrow ravine, cut in the mountains by the waters that descend from the glacier before referred to. The descent of the coach-road into the depths of the gorge is marvellously sudden; and owing to the narrowness of the ravine, and the precipitous character of its walls, the road along the bottom has had to be, for the most part, cut out of the solid rock, at a distance varying from fifteen to thirty feet above the bed of the stream, and is no wider than is absolutely necessary to allow the coach to travel on it. From the serpentine nature of the river bed the road-ledge has had to follow a number of sharp bends, where the coach sometimes finds itself at an unpleasantly sharp angle to the horses. In some places the road has been built out over the stream, on a sort of corduroy construction, resting on piles; and twice in the length of the gorge (some three miles) the river has had to be bridged. The whip who takes a team of five down this ravine must have nerve enough to win a battle; but what must his courage have been who first drove a coach down this perilous road!

The first part of the road, after leaving the beds of Shepherd's Lily in the pass, makes the descent very suddenly by means of a steep zigzag, which doubles on itself

several times. The sight from this zigzag, even when only such a rapid glance is to be had as is possible from a coach bowling down-hill at a giddy pace, is payment for the fatigue of a trying journey: but to see it under favourable conditions is a lifelong memory. The most favourable conditions are these:—It must be the morning after a day of continuous heavy rain: the sun must be shining and lighting up the moist and glistening foliage: clouds must still be moving about the mountain sides of the gorge, alternately obscuring and revealing their buttresses: the Otira must be in flood, but not enough to deaden the ice-green of its water: and streams must be pouring down the sides of the ravine in innumerable cascades of infinitely varied shape and volume. Further, you must *walk* by the gorge at a leisurely pace, so that you may slowly drink in the magnificence of this sight at every vantage point. And if the wooded but-

tresses of the mountains should be flushed with the crimson of the rata blossom, then the head of the Otira Gorge is seen to perfection.

The river is well named Otira (white water), for as it leaps down its gigantic staircase of boulders, it is seen only as a white foam: and not till it gets to a lower level, and has leisure—though its course is even then by no means placid—to occasionally lurk in some pool dammed up by a barricade of rocks, do you see the true colour of



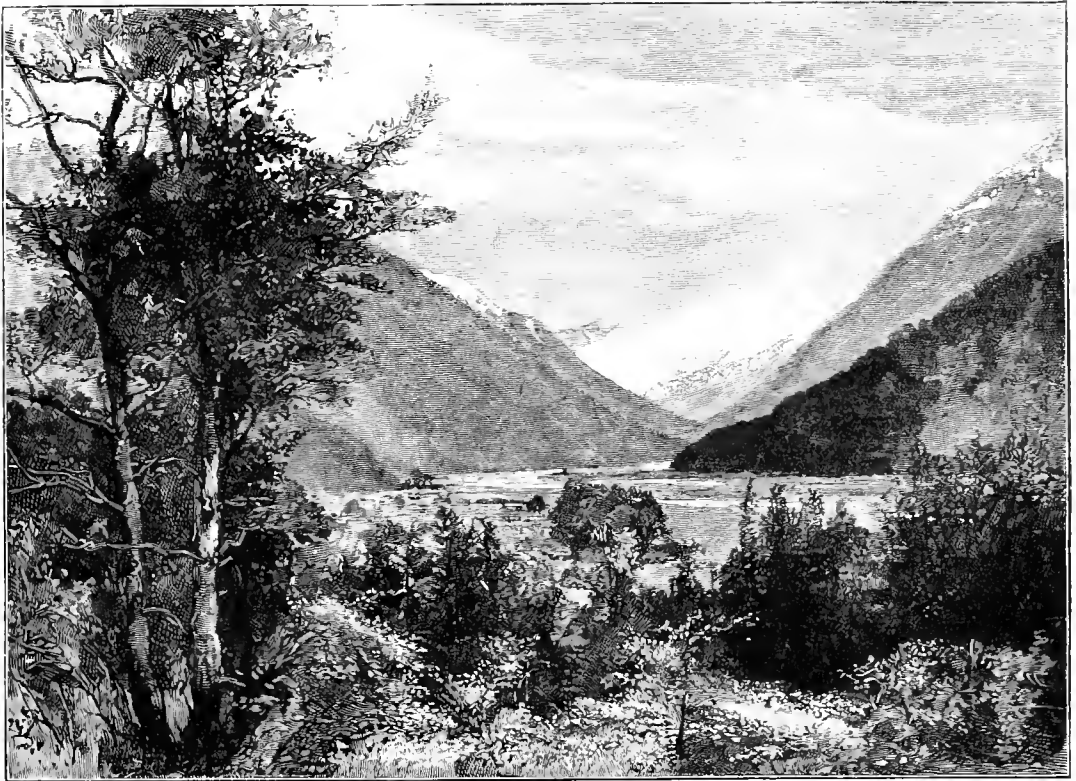
ON THE TEREMAKAU RIVER.

the water to be a pellucid bluish-green, particularly pure even for an ice-river. If you drink once of its cold water, you will drink and drink again—with results, not always agreeable, for ice-water should not be taken too freely.

The vegetation of the gorge is exceedingly rich and varied: tall forest trees, handsome shrubs, beautiful in outline and in foliage, delicately cut ferns and mosses, graceful clambering rock-plants, and pretty white flowers of different kinds growing from the crannies of the rocks. There are few spots that are not covered with appropriate vegetation: for even where a land-slip has occurred, or a cutting has been made, a short time sees the spot covered again with the most charming growths, so favourable here are the conditions of shade and sunlight, shelter and moisture. The very stones that form in places a low breastwork between the road and the river are covered with a crust of grey and yellow lichens: and for miles along the bed of the stream the boulders are coated, on the side facing the sun, with a growth of bright red lichen.

The mountains that rise on each side of the gorge, and form its walls, vary in height from two to six thousand feet, and are clothed with forest, in some cases to the

very top, in others about two-thirds of the height. At the point where the accommodation house stands, the Otira is joined by a branch stream of its own size, which descends through a similar gorge; and here the bed of the river becomes much wider, and what was a gorge expands into a narrow valley. At this point the road



THE BEALEY RIVER (NORTH BRANCH).

fords the stream, and follows the winding of the left bank. The route along the Otira to its junction with the Teremakau is one of the loveliest pieces of woodland scenery it is possible to conceive. The grandeur—and it is very grand—is not of the savage kind; it seems rather as if the beautiful groves and avenues of stately trees had been the careful charge of generations of artists. For miles the road passes under the shady roof made by the arching branches of birches, the trunks of which rise with the grace and strength of Grecian pillars: and occasionally you emerge from the shade into the open to find yourself confronted with some towering mountain, such as Mount Alexander, the sides waving with refreshing foliage, the tops covered with everlasting snow.

LAUNCESTON AND THE NORTH.

The Northern Capital—Love at First Sight—The Tamar—The Streets—The Buildings—The Town Park—The Mechanics' Institute—The South Esk Gorge—Cataract Hill—Queen's Wharf—The Environs—Hobart to Launceston—Engineering Triumphs—A Scriptural Locality—The "Half-way House"—A Scene of Grandeur.

WHAT Hobart is to the south of Tasmania, Launceston is to the north. It is commonly spoken of as the northern capital, and in size and importance it far exceeds every other town in the island except Hobart. Its import and export trade is greater than that of Hobart, and it is the natural outlet of those mines and agricultural areas in which the north of Tasmania is far more favoured than the south. It lies, however, in a much narrower compass than Hobart, and has less room for free expansion. A flat strip of land along the North Esk, where it joins the Tamar, is shut in by an amphitheatre of hills. The business portion of the town lies on this flat, which for convenience of description we may consider as extending east and west along the water side, though, if we are to be strict, north-east and south-west would be more accurate. Regarding the direction, however, as east and west, we may divide the streets of Launceston into sets, those which run east and west, and lie mainly on the flat, and those which run north and south, beginning on the flat at the northern, or water-side end, and running up the steep hillsides at the southern or inland end. Hence the whole town is seen at a single view by anyone coming up the Tamar in one of the river steamers, or in a vessel of that fine line which brings thousands of visitors every summer from the other colonies; and it may safely be said that this first sight of Launceston is something which must dwell in the memory for life. About five miles from the town a sudden bend in the river displays the white buildings covering the hillside; and the beauty of the view increases as we draw nearer and nearer.

While speaking of the Tamar, it is well to bear in mind that it is not a river in the true sense of the word, nor is it an arm of the sea, while it is too long, narrow, and tortuous to be called an estuary. It is, in fact, exactly what the Humber is in England, the common outlet of two other rivers. Just as the Humber is formed by the two Rivers Ouse and Trent, and commences its separate existence below freshwater-mark, so the Tamar is formed by the North and South Esk Rivers, and commences at Launceston. Of the Tamar, and the journey down its waters, there will be more to say presently; meanwhile, supposing we are now at Launceston, we shall find that in point of importance one street may be considered as comprising nearly half the town. This is Brisbane Street, so named from Sir Thomas Brisbane, Governor of New South Wales at a time when Tasmania was a dependency of the older colony. It is the principal street for shops and hotels. It is the street which remains distinct in the memory of visitors after their recollection of the rest of the town has become hazy and vague. It commences from the foot of the Cataract Hill, which rises almost like a wall on the western side of the town. The portion between the Cataract Hill and Wellington Street may be considered suburban. Wellington Street is one of those which

run north and south, and consequently it crosses Brisbane Street nearly at right angles. Like Elizabeth Street, in Hobart, it is part of the main road which used to form the means of communication between Hobart and Launceston before the railway was constructed.

Assuming that we wish to make acquaintance with what is best worth seeing in Launceston, we commence with Brisbane Street at the point where it is crossed by Wellington Street, and then proceed eastward, passing a well-appointed set of shops and a number of good hotels, and crossing several streets which run parallel to Wellington Street, among them St. John Street. At the corner of this and of Brisbane Street, the Bank of Australasia has erected a handsome building in the Italian style. A few yards further, on the right-hand side of Brisbane Street, the Mutual Assurance Society of Victoria have erected a splendid set of offices, and a little further still, on the same side, is the Launceston Club, the resort of the principal merchants and professional men of the town. Close to this, on the same side, lies the New Coffee Palace, one of the show-places of Launceston, and among the most recently erected of the numerous excellent hotels to be found in this little city. Immediately opposite to it, and contrasting strongly with the newness of the adjacent buildings, is the pleasant, old-fashioned Brisbane Hotel, reminding us, by its appearance and arrangements, of an English country-town inn of the old coaching days. The oldest hotel in Launceston, and quite an institution of the town, it was the favourite gathering-place of the leading tradesmen before the establishment of the Launceston Club. In George Street stands the new Academy of Music, containing an assembly-room calculated to hold 1,000 persons. A little further on in Brisbane Street we pass the Masonic Hall, another of the new buildings which have risen within the last few years. It is a handsome edifice, admirably arranged for all purposes of Freemasonry, and having on its ground floor a fine room, available for concerts, balls, and public meetings.

Crossing Tamar Street, which may be considered as the eastern boundary of the city, and proceeding along the suburban continuation of Brisbane Street, we have on our right a series of handsome villas on the slope of the hill, and on our left the railings of a pretty park, which on a hot and sunny day creates a longing for the enjoyment of its shady avenues and cool lawns. Skirting the palings, we come to a small gate, by which we enter the park, descending a few steps to a shaded walk. We are now in the Town Park of Launceston, and can spend a very pleasant half-hour strolling through the shrubberies, or over the well-kept lawns, occasionally resting on one of the comfortable seats with which the walks abound. The park is quadrangular, and can be entered on three of its sides. It has, however, only one entrance for vehicles. We have entered by the side entrance from Brisbane Street: if we go out by the corresponding entrance on the opposite side we shall find ourselves exactly facing the Main Line Railway Station: but if we wish to continue our inspection of the principal streets and public buildings of Launceston we must depart by the western end, through the iron gates which close the main entrance at night. Leaving the park, then, on this side, we cross Tamar Street, already mentioned, and enter Cameron Street, one of those which run parallel with Brisbane Street on the flat, and nearer to the

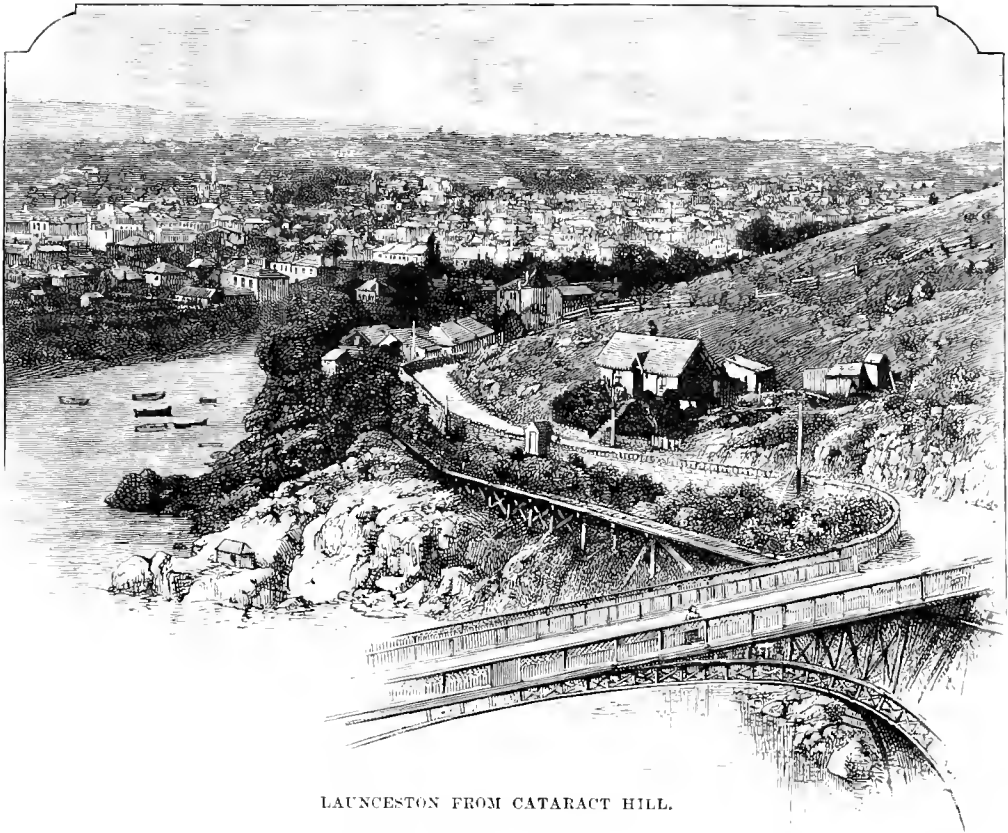
river. Where St. John Street crosses Cameron Street the Town Hall faces us—a large stuccoed building, with Corinthian pillars in a recessed portico. At another corner of the two streets is the Mechanics' Institute, where visitors to the colony find an excellent reading-room, to which they have free access by simply giving their names to the librarian. On the first floor of this building is a concert-room containing a fine organ, and adorned with life-size portraits of the Queen, Prince Albert, and other members of the Royal Family. These were painted by Mr. Dowling, a native of Launceston, who made himself a name in England as an artist of merit, and died there in 1886. A large painting of a group of Tasmanian aborigines, which hangs in the reading-room, is the work of the same artist, and is the more interesting from the fact that the race is extinct, and that all the figures are actual portraits.

The Government Offices in Launceston are large and commodious, but not remarkable for architectural beauty. They include the Post Office, Telegraph, Law, Survey, and Mining Departments. Of the ecclesiastical architecture the less said the better. The Wesleyans have a pretty church, built of red terra-cotta bricks, with stone facings, and surmounted by a graceful spire. Of the other churches, one or two may perhaps be considered as falling short of absolute ugliness.

If we proceed westward along Patterson Street we come to an Invalid Depôt, a Government institution, in which a number of aged and infirm persons are maintained at the public expense. Attached to the Depôt is a large pleasure-ground, where open air concerts are given in the summer months. Proceeding still along Patterson Street, we come in sight of a graceful iron bridge thrown across the mouth of the South Esk, where it discharges itself into the Tamar. In front of us rises steep, rocky Cataract Hill, already mentioned as closing the western end of the town: and through a narrow gorge in it rushes the South Esk River. This gorge, of the nature of one of those cañons of the Rocky Mountains about which we read so much in American literature, is a colossal rift between opposing cliffs of black volcanic rock. It is shut in by basaltic rocks rising on the south side to a height of about 400 feet. Half-a-mile up the gorge is a transverse barrier of rock, which forms the cataract. Above this is a large pool, called the First Basin, and still further up are the Second and Third Basins, all of volcanic origin. In the course of 1886 a new esplanade was constructed by the Municipal Council along the right bank of the South Esk as far as the First Basin. This track is a favourite resort of the townspeople and of visitors, affording, as it does, easy access to a spot whence a grand view is obtainable of the scenery of the gorge, and also of the city, spreading over its amphitheatre of hills. The Basin itself is a large pool of water, lying in the midst of steep, high hills crowned with wood. Its elevation above the Tamar is forty feet. Its clean pure waters look black on account of the shadows of the surrounding heights; and on a fine day we see the hills and woods distinctly reflected in the seemingly unfathomable depths of the pool. The Second Basin is comparatively little visited. It lies three or four miles out of town, and requires a rough scramble to reach it, but it well repays the trouble. The water lies smooth and placid between lofty banks, but issues foaming over rocky channels round the sides of an island some acres in extent, formed apparently by the detritus

brought down by the torrents from above. The Third Basin is still more difficult of access, and is seldom visited.

From the First Basin a steep new street winds up to the top of the Cataract Hill, whence we obtain a grand panoramic view of the town, and of the country beyond it, for we here overlook all the other hills on which Launceston is built; while to our left we look down on the winding course of the Tamar, which can be traced for many miles. Close beneath our feet we see the Reservoir which supplies storage to the waterworks, and



LAUNCESTON FROM CATARACT HILL.

a little to the right of it, in a large square enclosure, is the Roman Catholic Church and Deanery, with a convent, similar in character and constitution to the one in Hobart. Let us descend hence to the lower portion of the Esplanade, and along the waterside, till we come to a part where boats are to be hired. Taking one of these, and pulling up the stream beneath the iron bridge, we see the gorge from a new point of view. We find ourselves between lofty rocks rising almost vertically from the river-bed. Beneath the cliff on our left is a line of shoots to carry water to an overshot mill below the bridge. The leakage produces clouds of spray, which refract the sun's light, and brighten up the bare brown rock with rainbow tints. The length of the pool (as it is called) is half-a-mile; its width about 100 yards. After pulling about two-thirds of the way,

further progress is hindered by the Rapids. On the right hand bank is a favourite landing-place, at the foot of the Picnic Rock. A scramble up this would bring us again to the First Basin, which we have already visited by the easier approach of the Esplanade.

If we now return to the spot where we hired our boat, and keep along the water-side after landing, we soon arrive at the Queen's Wharf, situated at the junction of the North Esk and the Tamar. The approach to it is difficult, except at high water; and the larger intercolonial steamers often have to wait some miles from the town before the state of the tide enables them to get alongside. The wharf extends a good way along the left bank of the North Esk. A little beyond the end of it are the smelting works of the Mount Bischoff Tin Mining Company. The ore comes in bags from Enn Bay, looking like coarse black sand. It issues from the furnace in ingots looking like solid silver; and it is interesting to think how much those splendid ingots are daily adding to the wealth and prosperity of the colony. A few steps further on is a bridge leading to the right bank of the North Esk, and connecting Tamar Street, already mentioned, with the Inverary Road. Some of the oldest country residences around Launceston lie along this road, which skirts the suburb of Inverary. On the right hand going out of town is a Government reserve designated Inverary Park, the exercising ground of the Volunteers, containing the rifle-butts.

Amongst the other features of Launceston are the offices of the Australian Widows' Fund Insurance Society, in St. John's Street, a handsome building in the Italian style; St. John's Church, in the same street, interesting as being the oldest church in Tasmania, now that St. David's in Hobart has been pulled down to make way for the new Cathedral; and Prince's Square, skirting the same street. This is similar in character to Franklin Square, mentioned in the description of Hobart. It is planted with shrubberies, and laid out in walks, provided with comfortable seats. A large and handsome fountain, adorned with allegorical figures larger than life, stands in a circular basin in the centre of the ground. On the north side of the Square are the Scotch Free Church, of quasi-Gothic architecture, and a Congregational Chapel with Ionic portico.

The immediate environs of Launceston have many spots interesting from their own beauty, or from the beauty of the views which they command. In some cases, as in that of the Cataract and First Basin, both charms are combined. Mention has been made of Wellington Street as being a continuation of the Main Road. Like all the streets which run across Brisbane Street, it rises high on the hillside at its southern end. Near the point where it merges into the Main Road the old coach road to Westbury and Deloraine runs off abruptly to the right. Few more beautiful views of Launceston can be obtained than the one which meets the eye as we turn here and look around us facing the north or north-east. The views previously described are those which suppose us to face, more or less directly, the amphitheatre of hills which encloses the town. In the case of the view from the corner of the Westbury Road, we are ourselves on the top pier of the amphitheatre, and looking down on the stage. It is not on this occasion the scattered hillside suburbs which attract our attention, but

it is the city itself, and the glorious view beyond—the city lying compact on the flats by the waterside, with its square and massive public buildings, its towers and steeples—and the beautiful valley of the Tamar extending mile after mile, till the view is lost in the blue haze of distance.

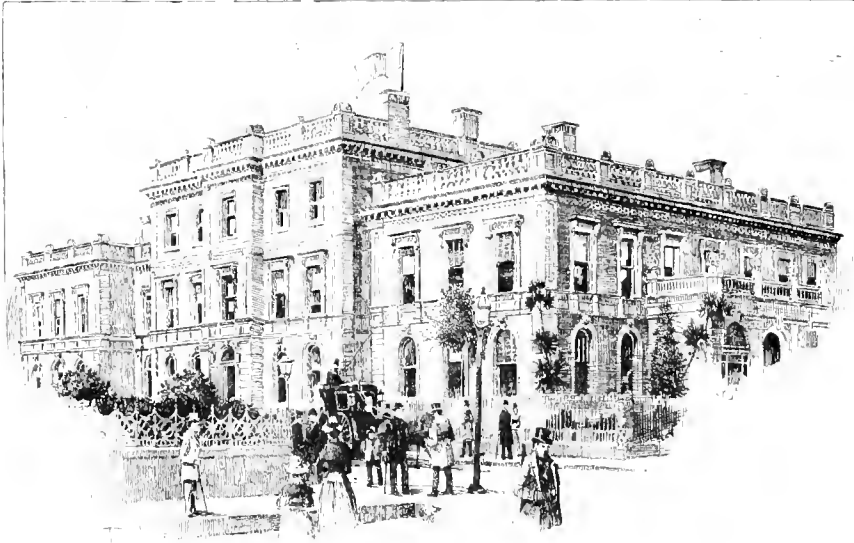
Or we may issue from the town at its eastern end, by following the line of Brisbane Street till it merges in Elphin Road. This is almost the only free outlet for the natural expansion of the town. As a consequence the road is rapidly becoming a street. A little way outside the town we pass the old racecourse, now converted into cricket-grounds for the two town clubs. This is on our left. A little further on, at the junction of the Elphin Road with New Street, is one of the finest educational establishments in the island, the Methodist Ladies' College. The building is a handsome one, with a tower, and is surrounded by well-kept gardens and recreation grounds. Just behind it, a little way up New Street, is the beautiful suburban residence of Claremont. About half-a-mile more along the Elphin Road brings us to a roadside inn, immediately opposite to which another road runs off at right angles, and conducts us to the North Esk, which is crossed here by a strong wooden bridge. The portion of country we are now traversing is called Patterson's Plains, and a drive of about four miles brings us to the village of St. Leonards, a favourite residence of the merchants and professional men of Launceston, since it is the nearest railway station to the town, and has the benefit of all the trains of the Western Line, as well as of the Main Line. Three miles further on we come to the romantic gorge of Corra Linn, through which the North Esk runs in a series of cataracts amid perpendicular rocks, the crevices being filled with rich green vegetation. A wooden bridge spans the gorge, and furnishes a good position from which to view the rush of the water.

The Devil's Punch Bowl, situated amongst the woods of the Penquite Estate, is easy of access, and a favourite pleasure resort. It is a pool, lying at the foot of a cleft in a greenstone precipice, and about fifty feet below the edges of the cliffs, which form an amphitheatre around it; the varied foliage and wild flowers surrounding it add greatly to its attractions.

The journey to Launceston from Hobart is by a railway known as the Main Line, which was opened for traffic in the year 1876. The terminus at Hobart is at the foot of the hill on which the High School stands. The line winds round this domain, passing close beneath the battery, circling the green promontory, on which Government House is situated; then passing through the gardens of the Royal Society; then high across the Risdon Road on a wooden viaduct; then past Newtown, and on to O'Brien's Bridge, through beautiful alternations of woodland, garden, mountain, and water scenery. This is the first halting-place of the express trains. The next is at New Norfolk Road, about half-way to New Norfolk, where coaches meet the train to take passengers on to that township. The train now traverses the Bridgewater Causeway, and speeds onwards through a cleared country to Brighton. Up to this point the course of the line has not deviated widely from that of the old coach road between Hobart and Launceston. Now it strikes into an entirely new country, and for fifty miles winds in and out through a thickly-wooded mountain district. The curves are abrupt

the gradients steep: and from time to time grand scenes open to view. The next stoppage after Brighton is Campania, a township created by the railway, and important for cattle sales periodically held there. Twelve miles further on the train stops at Jerusalem, near which are some coal mines, producing a highly bituminous coal. A long horseshoe bend with very steep gradient, rounding a narrow valley, shows at

the bottom of the ravine a tramway leading into the lateral drive, by which the coal is worked. Soon after this the traveller finds himself between the banks of a deep cutting; then comes a shrill whistle, and in another moment he is in utter darkness. The train



THE PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

is in a long tunnel, and takes two minutes to pass through it at full speed. It is known as the Flat-top tunnel, from the name of the hill through which it passes. Soon after passing Flat-top we see on our left hand what looks at first glance like an extensive grass-plain, but closer notice shows it to be a deep marsh completely overgrown with rushes. It is called Lake Tiberias, and, like its prototype of Galilee, is enclosed by hills on every side. Scriptural names abound in this part of the island. We have passed Jerusalem: the township of Jericho lies near the lake; and the lake itself is the source of the River Jordan, which winds through the midlands with very circuitous course till it enters the Derwent near Bridgewater.

The next halt is at Parattah, whence a short branch-line conveys passengers to Oatlands, the highest above the sea-level of all the Tasmanian townships. At Antill Ponds, where the next stoppage occurs, we see near the station an inn bearing the name "Half-way House." It lies on the main road, and indicates pretty nearly the mid-distance between Hobart and Launceston, as measured along the old coach-road. From this point, to about the last twelve miles of our journey, the main road and the main line keep close company. We have short stoppages at the pretty townships of Ross and Campbell Town, which lie on the main road, at the corners where the Fingal line of rail runs off eastward from the main line; and at the Epping Forest Station, the commencement of a half-cleared woodland plain. Then there is a halt at Evandale, a pretty, English-looking village, with a church steeple conspicuous on the hillside. Two

miles further on, at the Evandale junction, the main line joins the Launceston and Western Railway. From the Forest Station to Evandale the scenery has been uninteresting: now it opens again into grandeur. The train runs along the side of a hill, which shuts out every view on the left, while on the right are wide, undulating plains below us, with the Ben Lomond range bounding the view in the distance. As we near Launceston, the valley closes in. We see the course of the North Esk marked out by a continuous line of high and thick willows, completely concealing the river. We see also a large village on the hillside opposite, with handsome houses and gardens sloping down to the Esk. This is St. Leonards, a favourite place of residence with the citizens of Launceston. Here the express makes its last pause, and then rushes across the Esk, and along a series of water-meadows, and so arrives at the Launceston terminus.

The distance of Launceston from Hobart by the railway, let me add, is 133 miles. There are many other stations besides those that have been mentioned, but I have specified only those at which the express trains stop. The journey by express occupies six hours. This does not indicate a very high rate of speed, but it must be borne in mind that the line is on the narrow gauge, 3 feet 6 inches between the rails, and this, of course, will not admit of so high a rate of speed as the broader gauge of English railways, though it is more suitable for a mountainous country.



FOUNTAIN, PRINCES SQUARE, LAUNCESTON.

BATHURST.

The Two Great Questions—Early Pioneers—The Journey by Rail—The Nepean River—Excelsior—The Blue Mountains—The Lithgow Zigzag—Bathurst—A White Elephant—Places of Worship—The Gold Fields—Ophir—Hargraves—History of Bathurst—A Raid—Daring Bushrangers.

THE globe trotter who in the course of the modern grand tour has reached the waters of Port Jackson, and, after presenting his letters of introduction, has been duly "put up" at the Australian or the Union Club, finds that his Sydney acquaintances uniformly greet him with two questions—"What do you think of our harbour?" and "Have you seen the Blue Mountains?" Of course he duly "does" the harbour, and whatever poetry is in his soul cannot fail to be charmed into life by the exquisite beauty of its leafy recesses and gleaming tracts of fairy landscape. But even Sydney Harbour is not an inexhaustible theme of conversation: and when everyone he meets, whether at the club, or in the ball-room, or on the tennis-lawn, asks the same two questions, he is not long in coming to the conclusion that a visit to the Blue Mountains is an essential part of the tourist's excursion to New South Wales. To describe the range itself is not the purpose of this article, the subject being dealt with elsewhere.* Suffice it here to say that they form one section of the great dividing ridge which is the backbone of Eastern Australia, running parallel to the coast. Towards the sea the hills are so precipitous that for a quarter of a century after the settlement of the lowlands no white man had been able to penetrate beyond their ramparts. At last, during the administration of Governor Macquarie, a passage was discovered, and the picks and shovels of convict gangs soon made a practicable coach road to the interior, whose terminus was for the time fixed on the banks of the upper Macquarie in the undulating plains of Bathurst, a hundred and fifty miles from Sydney. These wide-swelling downs soon became transformed into a busy settlement, and Bathurst earned her title of Queen of the West. Bold pioneers pushed out into the bush further west, and found that the plains they had left formed part of the basin or valley of the Macquarie river, beyond which rose more high ground, crowned by the extinct crater of the Canobolas, whence the country imperceptibly sloped towards the interior, forming a district rich in promise alike for pasturage and farming. In this district, accordingly, large sheep and cattle farms were formed, and the owners, prevented from taking frequent journeys to Sydney by the tedious and rough character of the mountain road, soon made Bathurst their commercial headquarters, so that the newly-founded city rose into an importance of which later settlements have never deprived it.

Hurrying through the Sydney streets, with their screaming steam trams and storeyed warehouses, we arrive at a regular metropolitan railway station, where the converging and crossing lines remind one of Clapham Junction, in the old country; and, pushing through the crowd of business men who are streaming in from suburban

* *Vide* p. 36.

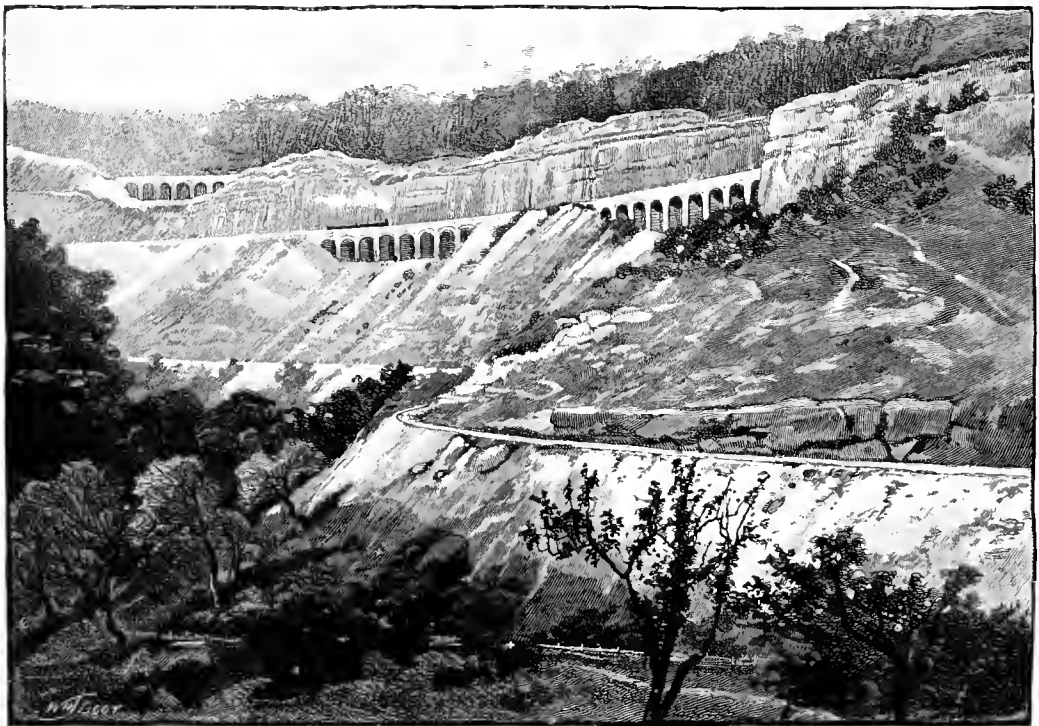
platforms, at last find ourselves in one of the comfortable saloon-carriages of the western train. Far away on the horizon we can just see a faint outline of sky-blue hills fading into the haze of the morning sky, and as the rushing carriages bear us over flat plains of grass and corn land, what before seemed a rim of high ground now looms larger as a great mountain rampart sloping steeply to the level land below. We clatter over an iron bridge, beneath which is a splendid stretch of river, straight as an arrow for a mile or so. "What a reach for a boat-race!" remarks our tourist. But he has hardly finished examining the river scene when his attention is attracted to the slow, upward toiling of the train, which is now beginning to climb a zigzag track to the summit of the ridge. He listens to the "pull-a-bit and shove-a-bit" of the two engines as they drag their load past Knapsack Gully—a name that recalls the tramping of early pioneers—and then rushes to the window to gaze his fill on the splendid panorama below. The train is running for a short distance along the mountain ridge, and immediately beneath flows the stately Nepean, with the tiny farming town of Penrith, now looking like a dolls' village, on its banks. Beyond stretches forty miles of verdant plain, and in the dim distance the headlands of Sydney Harbour can just be discerned. But giant gum-trees rush enviously in and obscure the view, so the traveller settles down to read his railway volume, until "Mount Victoria," called lustily by station porters, informs him that he has reached nearly the highest point of his long ascent.

Here we are in the heart of the Blue Mountain scenery, and by alighting and taking up quarters at the "Imperial," or any other comfortable hotel, easy excursions might be made to the great gorge of Govett's Leap, or to Wentworth Falls; but as our present destination is Bathurst, we only avail ourselves of the twenty minutes' stoppage for refreshments, and retake our seats near the windows on the look-out for any glimpses of mountain scenery that may be caught as we rush out of the numerous railway cuttings. And they are not few, nor wanting in grandeur. Now it is a view of wide mountain valleys, overspread with the grey-blue tint of thousands of gum-trees, while tall bare pillars of sandstone, like the rock columns of the Needles off the Isle of Wight, stand out in relief, and pass in panoramic fashion slowly before the revolving background. Glancing over this vista of labyrinthine valleys, it is not hard to realise how even experienced countrymen can get lost in the bush, or to understand the difficulties of Wentworth, Lawson, and Blaxland, in their pioneer march across the ridges.* Hardly has the train passed this broken ground than, issuing from a long tunnel, our course begins to descend, the siding which we have just left being the highest point of the line. Before long a close observer notices that the telegraph wire has left the railway track, and is carried abruptly down the valley at right angles to our course. This is the first indication that we are approaching the well-known Lithgow Zigzag, whose singularity as a piece of engineering, and whose beauty as a specimen of scenery, are usually pointed out to visitors by their colonial hosts. In three long curving gradients the Zigzag leads down a valley of some 700 feet, and though to the stranger the sheer slope of the embankments, the height of

* *Uide* p. 40.

the stone bridges, and the gathering rush of the train as it whirls round great bluffs of rock, may at first be somewhat startling, yet the view both from above and below will charm him with curving outlines of masonry and constantly changing glimpses of glen and crag. Just beyond the Zigzag lies what seems destined to be the Birmingham of New South Wales. Already the tall chimneys of smelting-works show that Lithgow coal is being put to good use. Here iron rails are rolled out, pottery is fashioned, and a hundred black embankments indicate the industry that fills those long lines of railway trucks which run to the pit's mouth. All coal-mining centres have their tragic stories, and Lithgow does not prove the rule by exception. Some time ago one of the largest and most productive of these mines caught fire, several men losing their lives, and when a fairly successful attempt had been made to smother the conflagration by stopping up all the shafts, by one man's mistake the whole work was undone, three more lives were lost, and the pit had to be flooded.

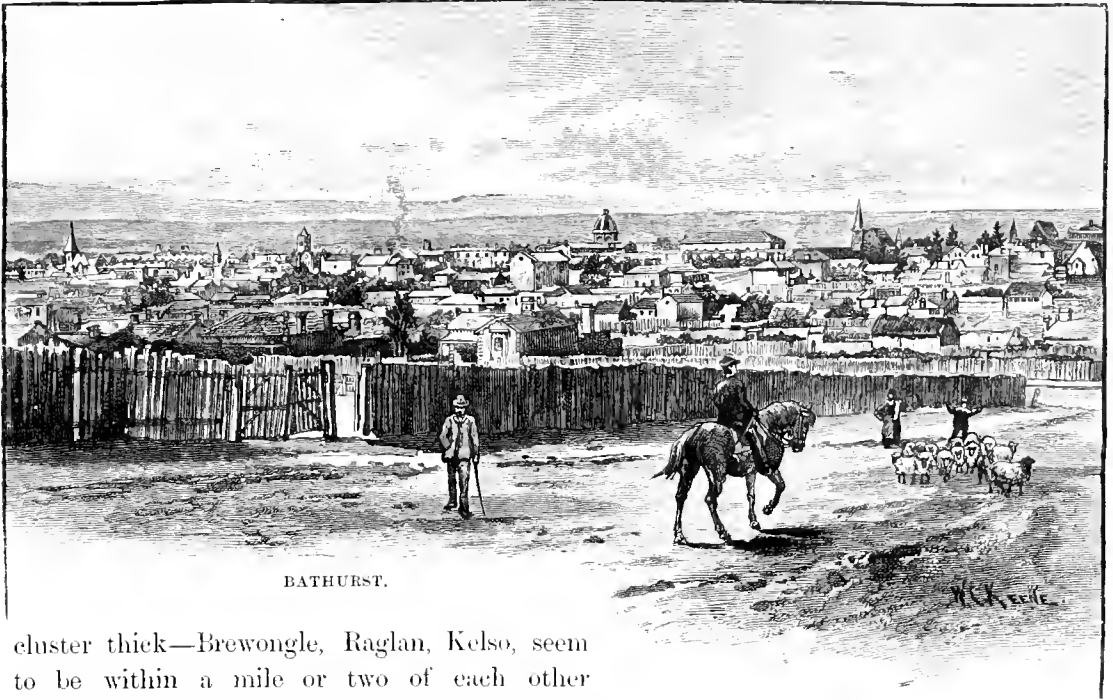
We will now push on to Bathurst. We are rapidly descending a long, winding incline, apparently following the track of some mountain stream, and the high ranges



THE LITHGOW ZIGZAG.

begin to be succeeded by "foot-hills," as a Californian would call them. They are still shaggy with bush: but on a sudden, as we turn out of one of the numerous cuttings, the wooded hills seem to gather up their leafy robes and stand aloof from the wide, undulating plains that come into our view, green with grass and with young corn.

telling of the civilisation which has displaced barbarism. To one living in these plains, it is as if the bush vegetation had followed the retreating track of its black masters, and was slowly withdrawing its reluctant steps to the margin of the plains which have been conquered by victorious whites. As we hurry on, the railway-platforms



cluster thick—Brewongle, Raglan, Kelso, seem to be within a mile or two of each other—and then a crowded city of red brick, standing out upon the plain, tells us we are in sight of Bathurst.

Bathurst at last! Ah, if we, sitting in our cushioned compartment, with raised binoculars, and the breeze lifting our hair at the carriage-window, could only realise the feelings of some eager digger or wayworn, footsore adventurer as he first approached this, the first Australian gold district! How those silent basalt hills seemed to guard beneath their rusty pillars the treasure of nations! Was yonder sandy river-bed of drougthy Macquarie, across which we clatter by an iron bridge, to prove another Pætohus? But to the ordinary visitor Bathurst is simply a commonplace town. It is in the light of its past that it becomes of interest. Few towns in Australia are historic, and of most, all that can be said is that they have a history before them. Bathurst, however, has its tales of the gold fever and of the bushrangers; and it cannot but be that when the future Walter Scott or Bret Harte of the southern hemisphere takes pen in hand, the relation of the strange scenes that have been enacted here will lend fresh interest to the place.

However, the train has rattled in; passengers for the far west are busily using the time allowed them for refreshments, and meanwhile we clear ourselves from the crowd and proceed to the Royal Hotel, after which we take a glimpse of the town

from the top of one of the neighbouring hills. Plainly to be seen is the spacious City Square, with its deserted market-building in the centre—the “white elephant” of the township—built for a purpose which it never served. Around this lie the blocks granted to religion and education. Places of worship raise their steeples on all sides. The Anglican Cathedral, with its deanery, its chimes, its costly new organ; the modest whitened walls of what was once the Cathedral School, since closed to make way for undenominational experiments; the picturesque Italian architecture of the Roman Catholic Cathedral, with its iron railings, well-kept grounds, its nunnery and priests' houses, and the little schoolroom where the faithful still maintain a determined stand against encroaching secularism; the trim chapel and spire of the Wesleyans; the quiet, comfortable church of the Presbyterians—all cluster close to the city's heart. There, too, is the old Gaol, the nameless nucleus of old Bathurst—*infandum, informe, ingens*—dull-coloured and silent, soon to pass away with its ugly walls and uglier memories; while beside it towers the distinctive feature of modern Bathurst, a great dome, brooding over the Court-house, the Post and Telegraph Offices, like a miniature St. Paul's in some nascent London. On the hills that surround the town are various large buildings, some of a public character, as the two denominational Colleges, All Saints, belonging to the Church of England, and St. Stanislaus, to the Roman Catholics; the District Hospital, which is the finest building in New South Wales out of Sydney, capable of holding eighty patients; and last, but by no means least, the new Gaol, which, at a cost of about £80,000, is being erected on the airiest, healthiest, and choicest site in the district—perchance to form the nucleus of another suburb. Besides the public buildings, there are visible the houses of wealthy residents, among which are conspicuous the towers of Hathrop, the seat of a gentleman distinguished alike for hospitality and for his efforts to improve the town. The surrounding land may, for simplicity's sake, be divided into four portions like the quarters of a hot cross bun. Each of these is chiefly held by members of families which trace their title back to the original land grants of Governor Macquarie or his successors.

Two of the neighbouring gold-fields are easily accessible to the tourist—Hill End and Ophir. Both are fairly worked out. As the latter has the unique interest of being the site of the first gold discovery in Australia, we will journey thither. It is thirty miles of up-and-down-hill work; at first we pass along a well-metalled road by Mount Pleasant, where the white obelisk of old General Stewart, a Peninsular veteran, shines from a hill flanking the road, while the granite mansion built by his son relieves the scenery with its Elizabethan gables: thence by tracks, now less frequented, but once trodden by thousands of eager feet, past the Icely copper-mine, up the steep slope of Dead Man's Pinch, marked by the mouldering railings of some forgotten grave, till beyond a further crest we sight the Lewis Ponds Creek, and, where it joins the Summer Hill, arrive at the township of Ophir.

One man here seems to be all-important. If Louis XIV. could justly exclaim “L'état c'est moi,” with equal justice can Mr. George Slater say that he is Ophir. The hotel, the post-office, the butcher's and blacksmith's shops, the general store, the church and school and cemetery—all these, together with a large part of what remains of the

mines, belong to and are under the immediate supervision of this potentate, who, having himself been a working miner, has a ready sympathy with and an intimate knowledge of the wants of "tributers" and "fossickers." He will himself conduct you to a stone causeway across the river, below which the water, fighting its way between huge boulders of white quartz, streaks with foam-flakes the green depths of a neighbouring pool, in which are reflected the flashing sides of a massive rock called "The Bluff." It was at this spot, in the year of the first great International Exhibition, 1851, that digger Hargraves first found traces of that rich ore that has formed such a marked feature in the Colonial Courts of later Exhibitions, and which, more than anything else, has contributed to the rapid development of manufacturing industry and the swift growth of large cities in Australia.

Intense was the excitement in this little country town when it was known that gold had been discovered within a day's journey. Bathurst was deserted, and there was a veritable stampede for the diggings. Everyone hastened to be the first to "peg out a claim," and abandoned his ordinary occupation in the excitement of searching for gold. The mason threw down his trowel, the bricklayer his hod; the ploughman left his horses staring after him from the furrow; the attorney and the book-keeper started for Ophir, pen behind ear—all eager to be first on the "rush." Not a pick, nor a spade, nor a "cradle" was there among them; and yet, when on that inaugural evening of Australian gold digging they arrived breathless at the quartz rocks, such was the richness of this virgin field that with their penknives they were able to loosen enough nuggets to fill their pockets with specimens.

Such was the beginning of this new era in the history of Bathurst, and as the visitor now walks its streets, and sees in them the quiet routine of a provincial town, he can hardly realise the scenes of excitement that were enacted there in the days of the gold fever.

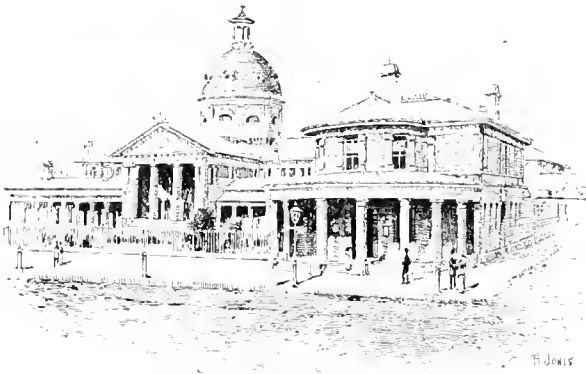
Great was the impetus given to the town by this new industry. Storekeepers and publicans realised rapid fortunes. Handsome brick houses replaced the weatherboard tenements of former days, and vacant allotments were quickly built over; while at the same time the colony developed its resources, telegraph lines ran like a great nerve system connecting the various centres, and even the roughly extemporised digging townships which fitfully sprang up and as fitfully died away were organised and placed under systematic administration.

It would seem almost impossible, in the security afforded by the appliances of modern government, that perils like those of the old English high roads should continue to exist. Yet so it was. And not only were the outlying districts frequently infested by bushrangers, who surprised the mails or the gold escort, but even townships were occasionally at their mercy. The year 1863 is especially memorable on this account in the history of Bathurst. The journals of that year teem with accounts of outrage and robbery, and with complaints of the mismanagement of the police, while huge advertisements offer rewards, in some cases amounting to a thousand pounds per head, for the capture of the outlaws. The most notorious of these gangs was known as "Gardiner's," and afterwards as "Ben Hall's," consisting of six desperadoes named Gardiner, Hall,

Gilbert, O'Meally, Dunn, and Vane. Mounted on thoroughbred horses which they seized from the stockowners of the district, they robbed the mails or "stuck up" wayfarers in various parts of the mountain ranges between Bathurst and Goulburn. Gardiner made his escape to Queensland, and then Ben Hall became the captain, and shifted the scene of his operations towards Bathurst and the Lachlan river, where he had formerly been a small squatter.

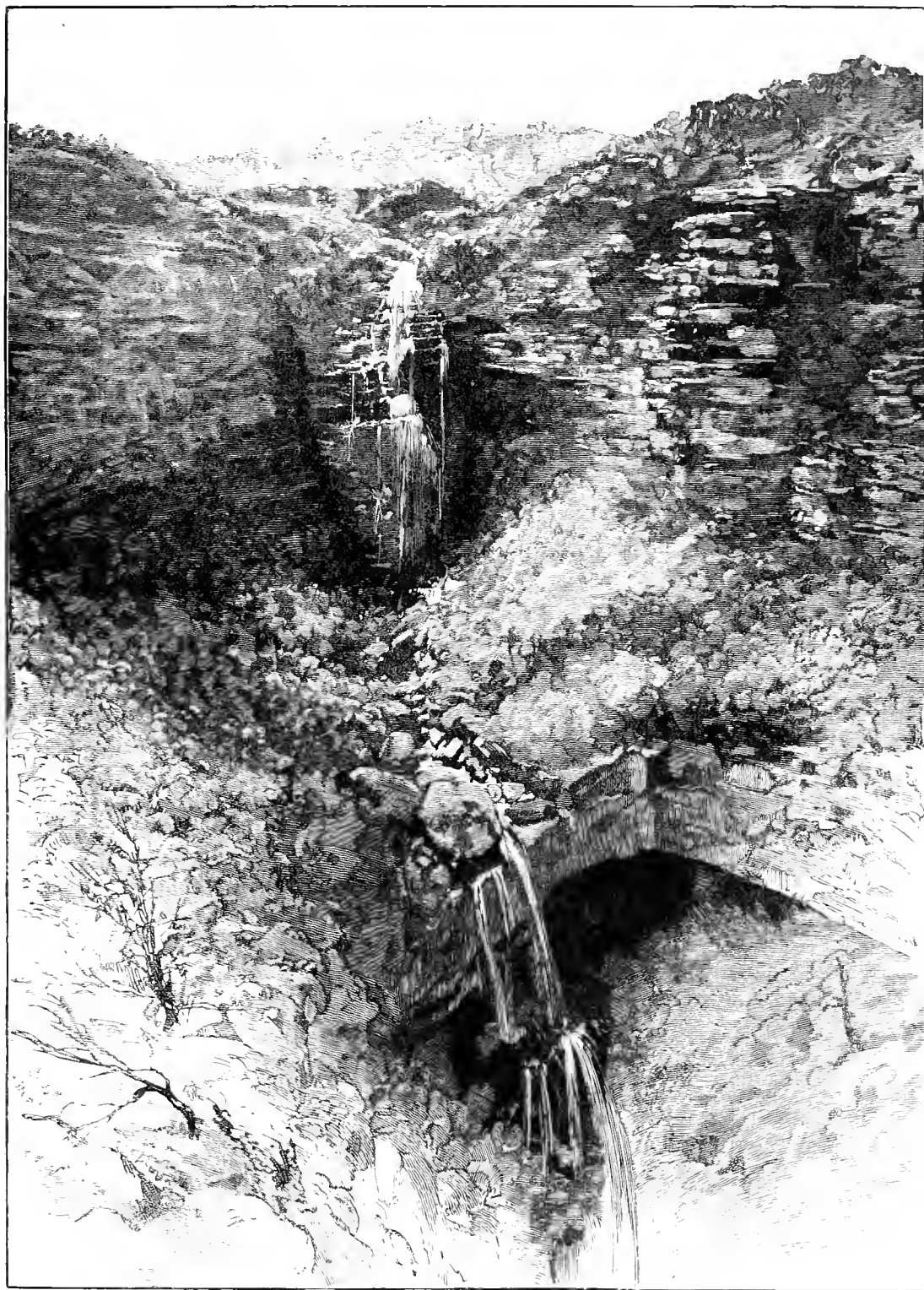
It was at the latter end of 1863 that the alarm in Bathurst reached its height. Towards dusk on Saturday evening, the 3rd of October, five horsemen rode into the big open square, where the market now stands, and leaving one of their number to act as scout, the other four proceeded to Pedrotta, the gunsmith's, not far from the police barracks, and asked to see some repeating rifles. As there were none in stock, the

men left the shop and proceeded to a jeweller's shop kept by one McMinn. Entering the back parlour, they found the family at tea, and, presenting their revolvers, ordered all present to be silent. One of the females, however, went into hysterics, which so disconcerted the ruffians that they retreated, still, however, covering the party with their pistols: and one of them as he went tried to lift a glass case on the counter, which foiled his effort because it opened inwards. Knowing that an alarm would quickly be raised, they sprang on their horses and galloped down the street, within two



PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BATHURST.

hundred yards of the residences of fourteen troopers and the police superintendent of the district. Two of them, missing their way, rode straight towards the barracks, when the leader of the gang fired a pistol into the air, and all four, turning up a corner street, galloped past the other end of the open square, where their comrade the scout joined them, and they made off as if for the open bush. Presently the clattering of the mounted police was heard dashing up in hot pursuit. Reaching the end of the street, the troopers waited at the edge of the bush and listened for the sound of hoofs, to indicate the direction taken by the fugitives. Not a sound could be heard. And no wonder. For instead of following the street, the bushrangers had taken a sudden turn to the left, and were at that moment "sticking up" De Clouet's public-house. They entered from the back yard, and left one man in charge of their horses, Gilbert and Hall then entering the bar parlour, where the former remained to guard the publican and a guest, who was robbed of £2, while Hall pushed his way into the bedroom, where Mrs. De Clouet was washing her baby. Thinking he was a drunken customer she ordered him out of the room, but he soon undeceived her, and demanded the cash-box, at the same time turning over the boxes and drawers. "Here," she exclaimed, "I'll find it for you if



THE WENTWORTH FALLS.

you'll hold the baby," whereupon the outlaw smiled grimly and showed his hands filled with revolvers. Having secured the notes and gold, he went into the bar parlour, and ordered De Clouet to hand over a favourite racing horse, Pacha, that was in the stables. De Clouet said the ostler had the keys, and the men going out, soon returned driving the ostler before them. He was threatened, but persistently said he had not got them; and then happily added, "The police have just ridden by." A smile of contempt curled Gilbert's lip as he replied, "Two of us are a match for four of them any day." However, the hint had its effect, for the men soon after rode off without the race-horse.

But the night's work was not yet over. As they rode in a leisurely manner down street, suddenly they saw on the rising ground a body of mounted police. These latter having at the same moment caught sight of the robbers, a desperate chase ensued, but the bushrangers, being the better mounted, got clear, and rode up the Vale Creek, a suburb of Bathurst. Soon intelligence reached town that the houses on the creek were being robbed. In one old woman's cottage, during the search for concealed money, a bed was ignited, but the robbers considerably helped her to put out the fire. Seven troopers under Captain McClerie were soon on the spot; but each house they visited had just been vacated by the bushrangers, who after dodging the constables for some time, galloped away unharmed into the back country. Three weeks later they attacked a Mr. Keightley, at Rockley, twenty miles from Bathurst, who had the good or bad fortune to shoot Vane in the abdomen. Being at last compelled, with his friend Dr. Pechy, to surrender, he was condemned to be shot with the same gun that had killed Vane, but on the entreaty of his wife was allowed to ransom himself for £500, which she and the doctor procured by riding in early on Sunday morning to the Commercial Bank at Bathurst.

The above description will give an idea of the impunity with which robberies were committed, until an improved system of police administration, a change of officials, and the inducement of large rewards, enabled the authorities to stamp out the evil. Gardiner, the originator of the gang that infested the Bathurst district, was caught in Queensland early in 1864, and sentenced to thirty-two years' hard labour; but in 1874 was released on condition of going to America, and it is said that he still keeps a public-house in San Francisco. Ben Hall and Gilbert were each betrayed by accomplices and shot by the police, Vane and O'Meally were shot by private persons whose houses they had "stuck up," and of all the band, John Dunn was the only one who met a well-deserved fate on the gallows. They were mostly young men, all except Gardiner and Hall being under twenty-three years of age. The career of this gang lasted from 1862 to 1865.

SOME BIRDS AND BEASTS.

The Dingo—His Ancestry—Dangerous Neighbours—The Native Cat—The Kangaroo—War to the Death—Wallabies—Kangaroo Hunting—The Emu—A Silly Bird—The Native Bear—The "Possum"—The "Guano"—The Sea Eagle—New and Old.



DINGOES.

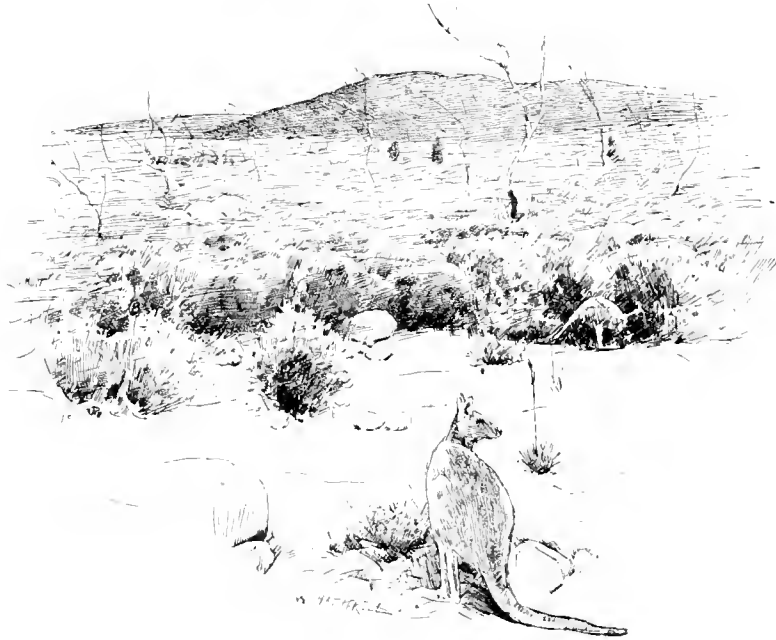
IN the fact that an animal a few pounds heavier than, and in all other respects like, an English fox is monarch, with the exception of the alligator and the treacherous snake, of the Australian carnivora, the student of natural history must sometimes have found himself wondering. Perhaps it is only accordant with the fitness of things that the origin of so humble a monarch should be doubtful. Is he indigenous, or does the continent owe him to vessels long since wrecked on the coasts, or to Captain Cook, or some similar source? My own opinion inclines to the theory that he is imported, in support of which view are the facts that in appearance and intelligence he is more like the domestic dog than the wolf, the jackal, or the fox, and that he is ready to cross with the dog, the result being a progeny of canine and not mulish race. This crossing is, indeed, a remarkable fact

in the history of the dingo: it is going on now more or less in every part of the country in which dingoes are found, and the cross is principally made, so it seems to me, with the stray collie. Hence black and black-and-tan dingoes abound, the normal colour being like that of the fox—red. So, too, when on dark nights these bush-scavengers are prowling round the camp and fighting over thrown-out bones, you hear now and then, though rarely, a decided bark. As I have only heard this bark at night, I am unable to say whether it proceeded from the true yellow dingo, or from one of his black-and-tan half-brothers. The cry by which the dingo is known is a howl, as of a tame dog in your neighbour's courtyard, what time he throws back his head in the moonlight and makes night hideous. The loss of bark by the tame dog gone wild is an interesting fact, which is discussed by Darwin in one of his works.

At the present day two causes principally contribute to keep in check the king of the Australian forests. The first is the use by man of strychnine, in defence of his flocks and herds; the second, the allied influences of dearth of food and disease—the lack of nutriment causing probably, to great extent, the manginess and distemper to which we refer.

Endowed with a cunning which in some cases equals that of the fox, the dingo is not always to be caught by even the most alluring bait. Sometimes the professional poisoner meets with a very crafty subject, who defies all the subtleties with which he

seeks to beguile him. A small portion of suet wrapped up in paper, the whole containing a grain of the deadly drug, is, if laughter belongs to dingoes, ridiculed by a knowing one as too childish an attempt on his life to be taken serious notice of. He scrapes a hole, buries the whole thing, and departs with openly expressed contempt of the bait and the layer thereof. A dangerous customer such a one: in a sheep-paddock in one single night he will fiercely tear a score of sheep, none of which will survive the deadly bite; from pure wantonness he will snap right and left at the massed and affrighted flock, and feast on one only, from whose struggling body, while yet alive, he tears his ghoulish repast.



MALLEE SCRUB AND KANGAROOS.

The dingo can be domesticated, but will prove scarcely worth the trouble. He shows no affection for his master, but rather exhibits towards him a life-long distrust, seldom allowing him even to lay his hand on him. His attention to domestic poultry is unbounded, and he will swallow any number of chickens, literally feathers and all. In fact, his brain power is most limited, as is apparent from the

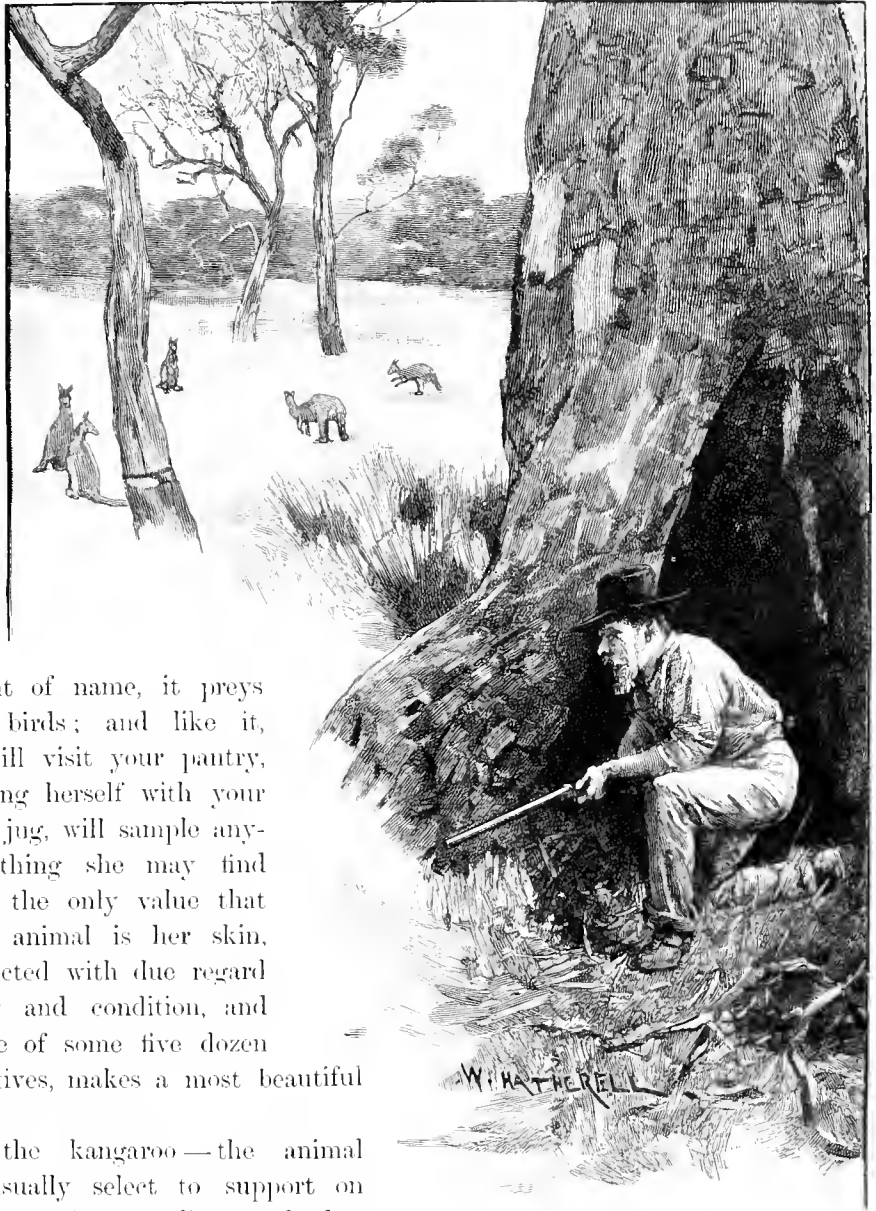
whole expression of his face. It would be interesting to know of what service the dingo was to the blacks before the arrival of the white man. An article of food he undoubtedly was, and still is; but when the white man's breed of dog appeared with the white man, the aboriginal immediately availed himself of the more intelligent race. As a matter of history, it little signifies whether the dingo was much used, or used at all, by the blacks: but it would be curious if we could know, though we never can, whether the wild dog, domesticated with the aboriginal, improved in intelligence or not. Probably the answer would be that the savage, from a lack of knowledge of the elementary rules of producing a special breed, and from want of appliances for mating selected stock, made no advances at all in improving the dog, if even he domesticated successive generations of the same family and not merely isolated cases.

By an easy transition we pass from the native dog to the native cat. For a marsupial, the female is wonderfully prolific, having as many as six young at a birth. While, by its quick movements and razor-sharp teeth, it disposes no doubt of many

of the younger snakes and constrictors, which share with it, to their destruction, its home of hollow log or tree, it in its turn falls, with its young, a victim to the larger snake no less than to the omnivorous "black fellow." Like its English *confrère*, which, however, it resembles in little save the accident of name, it preys on the smaller birds; and like it, again, "pussy" will visit your pantry, and, not contenting herself with your cream and milk jug, will sample anything and everything she may find there. Certainly the only value that attaches to the animal is her skin, which, when selected with due regard to good marking and condition, and placed with those of some five dozen more of her relatives, makes a most beautiful rug.

Concerning the kangaroo—the animal which heralds usually select to support on one side the arms of Australia—much has been written in many places, and we need not suppose that his general structure, habits of life, and appearance are not already familiar to the reader. The great fight that has been waging between his species and the invading race of mankind (in their turn invaded by the marsupial) is perhaps not so well known: and as it is one which has cost Queensland, directly and indirectly, many hundreds of thousands of pounds, and been the financial ruin of many a squatter, I may speak of it at some length.

It will be difficult to anyone not acquainted with the details of bush-life to



KANGAROO SHOOTING.

imagine that, the balance of nature being destroyed, it should become so formidable a task for man to deal with an abnormal increase of such an animal as a marsupial: wingless, and thus unable to escape him by taking to the air; not a burrower, to escape from him underground; not cunning, so as to avoid all but the subtlest traps; nor swift, so as to outpace the fleetest horses.

And yet it was so, that the kangaroo and his relatives, the wallaby and paddymelon, unchecked in their increase by the removal of their two great enemies, the black fellow and the dingo, who had succumbed or nearly so (the one before alcoholic, the other before strychnic, poison), so multiplied that man gave up the unequal struggle of fighting with gun, trap, and yard, and only conquered at last by surrounding his immense and luxurious pasturages with a fence that could be neither climbed nor jumped, on the outside of which the marsupial must fain be content to live.

But before the squatter brought his mind and opened his pocket to an outlay caused by the erection of many miles of wire-netting, the cost of which was never under £120 per mile, what sights were seen! A plain, stripped of all grass by the invading hordes, brown, too, with the figures of four or five hundred of the enemy, who, on the first appearance of a human being, dispersed in all directions, and with rapid bounds passed away into mere specks on the rolling downs. The poor starved sheep, wondering where their grass had gone, and why it did not come after the rain as of yore, were unable to copy the hardier kangaroo, who, if he never grows fat, can live on country where the domesticated animal must die. At night the wallabies, issuing from the scrub-lands that fringe the plains, annihilate the grass that grows adjacent to the scrub, working still further and further from their daytime retreat (the scrub) into the open plain, till about its centre they meet their brethren advancing from the scrub on the other side, and in conference decide that there is nothing on that side of the country left worth eating. Then to the scrubs go men, armed with double-barrelled breech-loading guns and countless cartridges; positions are taken up, and blacks and whites beat the scrub up to the shooters, whose guns never cease till grown too hot to hold, and around whom, when the "drive" is over, the wallabies lie in heaps. A hundred and twenty thousand killed in one year on one station by these and similar means made no difference apparently in the numbers of the survivors: and, as I said, defensive instead of offensive tactics has to be resorted to, while, in addition, a price varying from one shilling to threepence was put on the head of each grass-eating marsupial, of which the Government pays one half and the district in which the marsupial is killed the other half.

A fight between two kangaroos, witnessed from a distance, is not unlike a pugilistic encounter between two Frenchmen. This one dances forward and hits out with the left, the other retreats and parries; then, while feints are made with the hands, the feet are brought forward, and the great toe directed to disembowel with a formidable kick, such as, in proportion to his size, a kangaroo may be counted on to bestow with greater effect than any other animal.

In the south of New South Wales and in Victoria there are large districts where the kangaroo (it is an open question whether the plural takes an "s"—whether the



OPOSSUMS.

word follows the example of sheep or cow) exist, but not in great numbers. In such parts it is the usual practice to hunt, not to shoot, the animal. Kangaroo dogs are a special breed—a kind of strong greyhound. Kangaroo-hunting is excellent sport, judged not inferior to English fox-hunting by men who have tried both. The dogs hunt by sight, and the riders keep their eyes open whilst the game is being sought. Once the kangaroo is seen, all the rest is full gallop. The Australian horses may be trusted amongst the broken timber, which looks so awkward, and the English visitor had better let the horse have his head, and devote all his attention to sticking on. Very likely the run may be a couple of miles straight across country; it is often not so long. At its close the kangaroo is found “at bay,” and one of the hunters dismounts and hits the animal on the head with a “waddy,” a native name in common use for a short stick. If the animal be an “old man,” he will show fight and prove an “ugly customer.” An “old man” will often rip up a dog so as to disable him for weeks, if not to kill him. The kangaroo dead, it is usual to cut off his tail and to ride off with the reeking trophy.

Supporting Australia's arms on the other side of the heraldic device, stands the emu, the ostrich of Australia. Of no commercial value as regards plumage or food, the emu can only be regarded as an æsthetic appendage to bush landscape. With the merest rudiments of wings, his safety lies in the strong legs which, with the strength of a horse's, carry him out of danger from the spears of the blacks, or over the trackless prairies from one waterhole to another. He flourishes best on the endless rolling downs of the far west, where probably he can better defend his young from the assaults of his enemies—the dingo and the aboriginal. With food the emu is generally abundantly supplied, whatever else in the animal kingdom of Australia remains hungry, for the drought-resisting scrub furnishes at all times ample food of berries and leaves, which supplies him when the native grasses have dried up and disappeared, and when even the kangaroo begins to feel the pinch of short commons. In captivity the emu does not lose his marvellous powers of assimilation and digestion, and stories are told of kegs of nails, fish-hooks, pocket-knives, and other indigestible provender being taken by him—as a tonic, probably. In captivity, too, he appears to become possessed by the demon of mischief. One of his favourite amusements is to watch till a visitor to the house ties up his horse while he goes in to pay his call. Stealthily—although there is no occasion for concealment—down along the fence comes the joker, his neck depressed between his shoulders and curved downwards, his head wagging from side to side. Your horse arches his neck the other way, and with pricked ears and head immovable brings a fair tension on your bridle-rein. Nearer and nearer comes the emu,

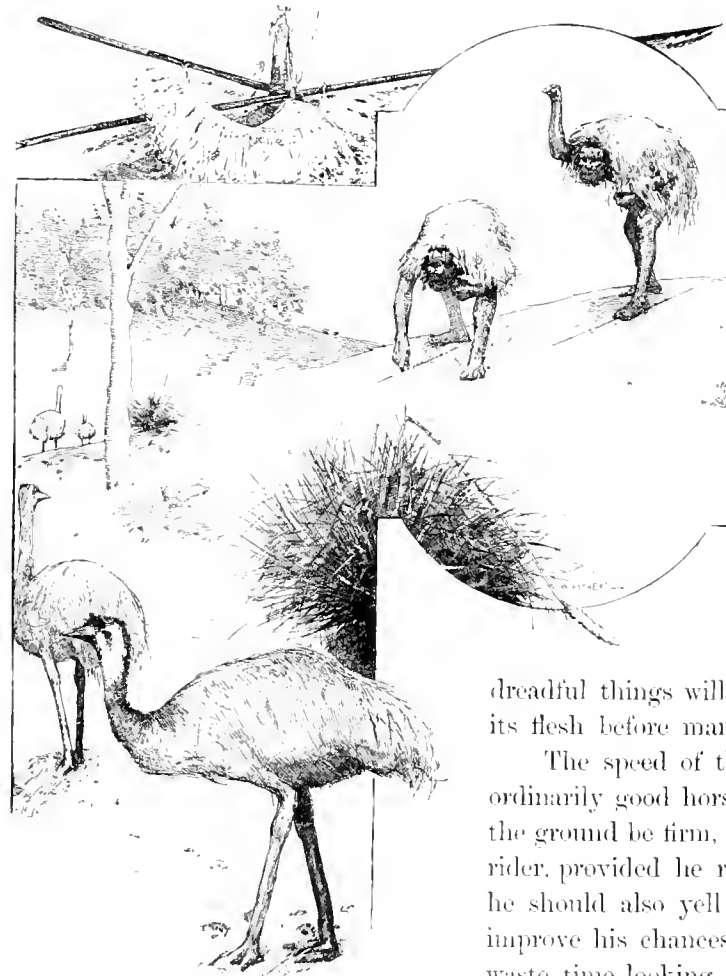
and now determines, as a good joke, to pass between your horse and the fence. The tension becomes greater; and yet all might have been well, and the horse have passed through the ordeal, and the bridle remained a bridle to you for years to come, but the affair seems so far too tame for your host's pet, and when under the horse's nose he suddenly puts every feather on edge, and with a shake, such as he and a Newfound-

land dog could alone give, appears to your horse like a dozen suddenly-erected umbrellas. You borrow a bridle and ruefully think of your saddler's bill, and have the indifferent consolation of hearing the young ladies of the house scolding "that naughty Jack."

To the blacks the emu stands in premier position as an article of food. It is a case of "cut and come again;" and so successfully does this appeal to the hungry savage, that the elders of the tribes impress upon the juniors that

dreadful things will happen to them if they taste its flesh before manhood.

The speed of the emu is equal to that of an ordinarily good horse with a rider on his back. If the ground be firm, the bird is to be caught by the rider, provided he races him "from the jump;" if he should also yell at the top of his voice it will improve his chances, as the foolish bird will then waste time looking around him, and will also run to cross the rider's line, having an idea implanted



EMU HUNTING.

in that absurdly small brain that he is being cut off from retreat. Should the hunter, however, proceed in a leisurely manner after his quarry (say, at a good hand-gallop), I doubt whether, after he had chased him thus on relays of horses three times round Australia, he would be any nearer to catching him.

To give the silly bird his due, he displays a certain, not too excessive, amount of courage in defending his young, which are reared amid many perils, and which spring from those handsome green and black eggs which, being on the western plains of Queensland of no commercial value whatever, are transformed into valuable works of art by the hand of the silversmith when turned by him into cups, flagons, or inkstands. The

skin makes a handsome carriage-mat, but is not of sufficient commercial value to recoup the hunter. For that and other reasons, there seems no danger of the bird becoming extinct, since his two chief enemies—the dingo and the aboriginal—are, to his welfare, disappearing. However, on account of the damage he does to wire fences—not by eating them, as has been supposed by some, but by breaking them when crossing from one paddock to another—many managers of sheep stations on the Barcoo, in Queensland, cause nests of eggs, when found, to be destroyed.

From the emu let us descend to smaller game, though of name pretentious, and look at the native bear. He is no bear, as the most casual observer may see, but belongs to the sloth family. My first acquaintance with him was in this wise:—He was a *rara avis* in the district in which I was living, and I happened to be journeying on a road along which, preceding me by a few hours, was a mob of travelling sheep. I was crossing a range of hills; and stuck up in a low bush alongside the road was what I took to be the pelt of a sheep, which as I drew nearer assumed a form more whimsical than I had ever seen. I stopped not three yards from where the thing was, and gazed at the ingenuity that I supposed the cook belonging to the travelling sheep had wasted in concocting such an extraordinary figure, when suddenly the eyes rolled and the body slightly moved, and I knew that I was in the presence of a native bear. I had a good long



THE NATIVE BEAR.

look at him, and we parted to meet no more. The next occasion that I made acquaintance with his race was when, on rising early one morning, I found one clinging to a verandah-post. I could never make out whether he had lost himself in his nocturnal rambles and mistook my verandah-post for a tree, or whether he had visited me with predatory intent. Of him at any rate I made a captive, but he soon afterwards died.

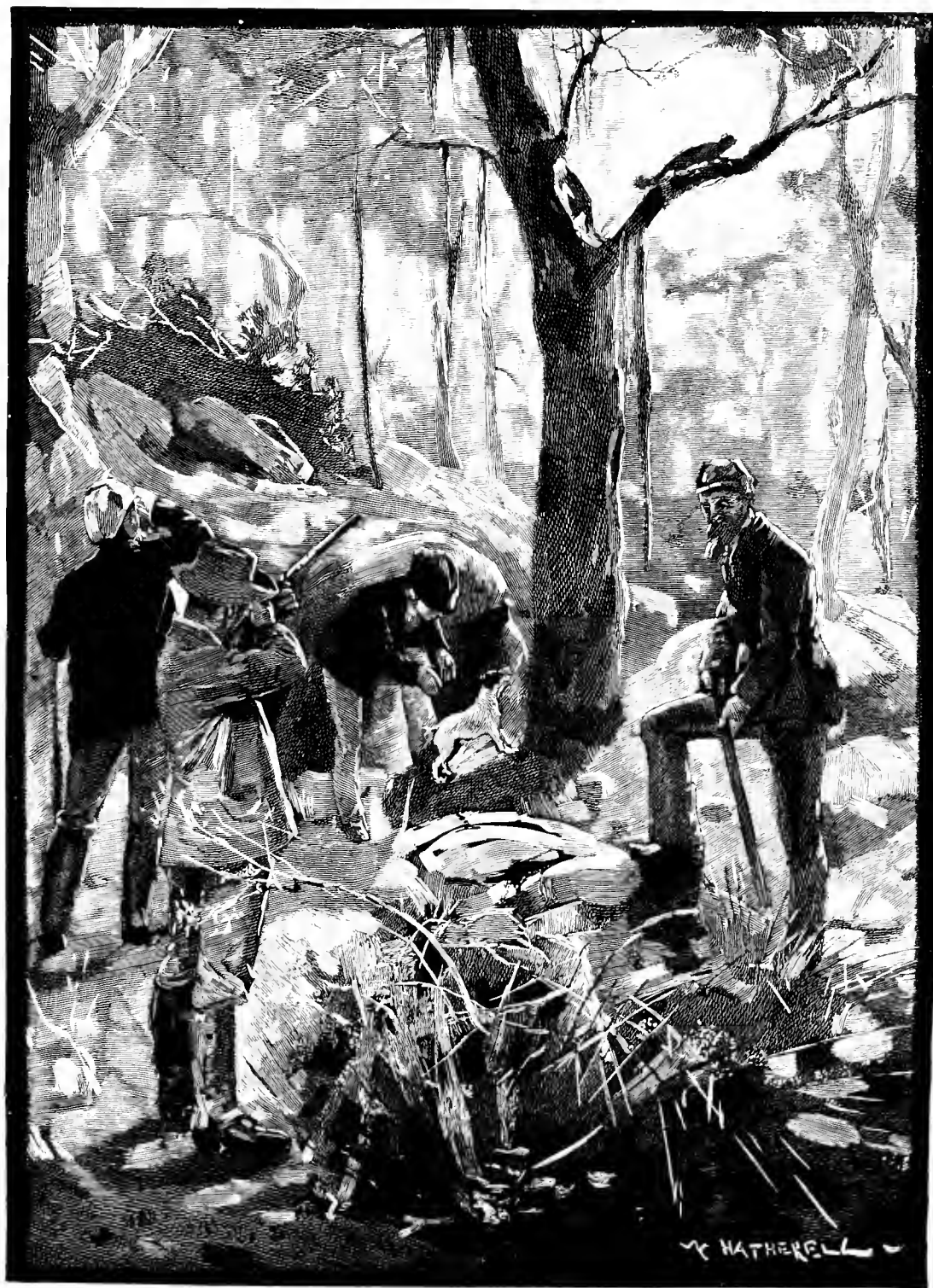
The native bear is an almost brainless marsupial, and must surely be very low in animal intelligence. The female carries her young on her back as soon as it outgrows her small pouch, and does so much of it that her fur is always worn off just above where her tail would be if she had one. Otherwise her skin would make very excellent rugs, as indeed skins of the male bear do. For his food he

eats the leaves and flower of various eucalypti, and prefers to reside among the mountains: he probably does without water. He in his turn affords food to the omnivorous aboriginal, and "takes a lot of killing," as I have witnessed in one with three revolver bullets in his body. A fall of thirty or forty feet from a limb cut away from under him has no effect whatever.

There is a tradition in Melbourne, especially amongst the midshipmen of merchant vessels that trade there, that the native bear would fetch £300 in London, because of the great difficulty in conveying him thither. If he cannot get his supply of gum leaves, he dies.

Up the same tree, living on the same food, but more nocturnal in his habits, we find the "possum," which name is so entirely his that "opossum" has become pedantic. He is the daily bread of the aboriginal and of the benighted white man who is able to catch him. As an article of food he compares favourably with the rat when the prejudice which accompanies the eating of a rat is taken into account. In the hands of a French cook he might indeed become palatable; roasted on the coals he is tough, and any flavour he may have is of the gum-tree. A "black boy" or "gin" after a possum has to know the business. The bark of the tree shows the small scratches which the possum must perforce make when climbing up it after his food. Are the tracks fresh? That is, was that scratch (for the tree on inspection appears covered with them) made last night or the night before? If the night before, in vain would you look in the hollows of the tree. But it is otherwise, and step by step, in notches cut in the perpendicular trunk of the tree, rises the black boy till the branches are reached. Here his progress upwards redoubles in speed as he steps from branch to branch, and peers into the dead knots and butts of broken-off branches, of which the tree is full. Presently he looks very suspiciously down one of these apertures, and then, breaking off a piece of dry stick, throws it down the hole; it rattles in its downward course, and suddenly stops in a silent way that, to his practised ear, tells him that it has "struck wool." With the back of his tomahawk he hammers the spot where he thinks the possum lies, and possibly the noise dislodges his prey into a more accessible place. Hearing where the move has taken place to, he hammers again: but this time the reply is, in historical language, "J'y suis, j'y reste," and forthwith the coloured gentleman or lady (for both are expert in the use of the tomahawk) cut a nick, whence they shortly after extract our little woolly friend by the tail, and before he has time to think or wink, to bite or scratch, his head is brought into violent contact with the tree, and he falls at the foot of it a corpse. The possum is specially prized for his skin—the further south, the more valuable it becomes: and it must only be taken off him at certain periods of the year, the winter being preferred. If sought for his fur, he must either be caught as above, or trapped, as shooting, of course, injures the skin.

To fill your bag with possums, wait till the moon is at about 45°, and on a clear night go out among the gum and box trees, and gaze up into them with the moon on the other side till you see the possum's outline clear cut against



OPOSSUM SHOOTING.

the shining disc; make ready, present, fire! A roar through the silent forest and a thud on the ground tell you that your cartridge has exploded and your game has come to grass. Sometimes it is necessary to thin down the legions of possums which draw near to your homestead, and you do it thus in the night, to the great delight of small boys—white and black. Then your store may have rest from the nocturnal visits of this very interesting but objectionable little creature, who tackles your flour-bin and everything that is eatable, and not only eats but destroys, and, less nimble than the domestic cat, capsizes the bottles from the shelves, although he serves one purpose filled by the cat in other countries, viz., to take on himself the delinquencies of all and sundry. In Queensland all broken crockery is distinctly traceable to the possum.

Dismiss the possum with this short account of him, and look at another animal, who writes his name "iguana," but pronounces it "guano," or thus has it pronounced for him by the bushman. Of the order of the crocodile, and a knight companion of the excellent lizard, the iguana (let us be allowed to call him here the "guano") won't hurt you except you keep poultry; then he thinks himself entitled to go halves with you, and will take your eggs as fast as the hens can lay them, and the chickens long before you care to eat them. Needless to say, the blacks will eat him on all occasions, but perhaps it is necessary to warn you to have nothing to do with him in the way of food unless you have a *chef* to cook his tail:

when I can well believe, since the rudiments of meat are contained in it, you may like it quite as well as you would a frog or a toad disguised by the same deft hand.

A noticeable peculiarity of the "guano" is that he never remains, if he can help it, on the same side of the tree as any individual who wants to make his acquaintance. Perhaps it is shyness, perhaps it is that inherited experience teaches him that you require his "corporeal body" (as a grandiloquent old shepherd

I once had called it) to make a meal of, embalm, dissect, preserve, stuff: at any rate, he makes a point of keeping on the opposite side of the tree. In the sand he burrows, and there the eggs are laid; and from the shallow burrows the black gin's yam-stick disinters the skulking reptile, who soon lies on the dining-room table ready for consumption.

Another strong point about a "guano" is that he will voluntarily enter into a combat which every other animal except the eagle shirks; that is to say, he will seek out and fight the deadly snake, whose bite appears to have no more effect on him than would the peck of a sparrow. It used to be suggested that his habit was to retire



THE IGUANA.

after an encounter and eat some antidote; and odd bushmen have thought it worth their while to watch to what plant he repaired for refreshment. But nothing ever came of such investigation; and if the beast really is impervious to snake-bite, it must be for some other reason than the old-fashioned one, which, to say the least of it, is improbable.

Belonging to the same family as the iguana is the frilled lizard, which, while possessing the structure common to other members of the tribe, has anomalous characteristics all

its own. The capture of the first specimen, in Careening Bay, Port Nelson, is thus described by Mr. A. Cunningham:—"I secured a lizard of extraordinary appearance, which had perched itself upon the stem of a small decayed tree. It had a curious crenated membrane, like a ruff or tippet, round its neck, covering its shoulders, and when it was expanded—which it was enabled to do by means of transverse slender cartilages—it spread five inches in the form of an open umbrella. Its head was rather large, and the eyes, whilst living, were rather prominent; its tongue, although bifid, was short and thick, and appeared to be tubular."

Even as I think about the white-bellied sea-eagle, I sit and look at his lofty home on the heights of Yeppoon, that beautiful portion of the Queensland coast; and even as I look he leaves his lofty retreat and hovers in front of my windows by the margin of the tide, but high up, and level with my window.

Suddenly the wings close, and like a falling shell, and with a whirl audible where I am, he plunges headlong and seizes a sea-snake that the receding tide has just stranded, and, with powerful strokes of his wings, upwards he goes, the serpent writhing in the air. What happened to the Queensland eagle and snake was different from the sequel to the battle between bird and reptile described by Homer. A butcher's cart is returning along the hard, sandy beach, and the butcher sees the whole thing. The eagle, encumbered by the great, coiling serpent, flies in his struggles down to the lower strata of the air, and flutters clumsily along the shore; and, urging his horse into full gallop, the butcher flies after him, yelling with all his might. The eagle sees he is pursued, and, shortly dropping his prey, disappears into the upper air, while the crippled and still writhing reptile becomes



WHITE-BELLIED SEA EAGLE.

the property of the butcher, who, as I see through my glass, vivisects him on the spot, and finds contained within him or her ten or twelve smaller serpents, either swallowed for safety or ready for birth; which, we will leave naturalists to decide.

The reader may be glad to have the passage from Homer in an English dress. I am fortunate in being able to give it from a translation composed in Australia, and in many parts to the accompaniment of the music made by the waves of our Southern Ocean:—

“ Skirting the left of the host did an eagle towering soar,
And a serpent, a blood-red monster, clutched in his talons he bore,
Yet living and struggling; and still was its battle delight unquelled,
For backward it writhed, while yet in the grip of his claws it was held;
On the breast by the neck did it smite him, and earthward he cast the prey,
Agony-thrilled, and amidst of the throng of the Trojans it lay,
And adown the blasts of the wind he darted with one wild scream.”

Translation of the Iliad (Book xii.), by ARTHUR S. WAY.



THE JENOLAN CAVES.

Probable Formation—A Treasure-Casket—Discovery—Exploration—Approaches—The Entrance—The Grand Arch—The Devil's Coach-house—Nettle Cave—The Three Gorges—Exhibition Hall—The Confectioner's Shop—Elder Cave—Pearl Cave—Katie's Bower.

ANYWHERE along the coast-line of New South Wales, after watching the breakers foam themselves to death among the ruined rock-fragments below some grim precipice, we may turn inland and view on the horizon just such another line of cliffs, now impending over the broad Nepean and the pastures that line its banks, but once the guardians of the inner land against a raging sea. If Sydney Harbour were raised high and dry from the ocean level, in no long time its coves would be thick with undergrowth, its deep-hid recesses rank with tree fern and kurrajong, sassafras, and pine-scrub, and its whole appearance identical with that of a Blue Mountain gully. Such as Sydney Harbour is now were these gullies long ago: nay, even more lovely, no doubt, at least in their lower depths, where the coral-reefs filled up all the winding bays, and massed their glistening rock-palaces along the ocean floor. Ages ago, no doubt, life was abundantly and extravagantly strewn among the silent gorges that now rarely echo even to the wings of a stray parrot, or the "loping" homewards of an adventurous rock-wallaby; but the reefs remain, not in their old form, but more beautiful still:

"Nothing of them but doth change
Into something rich and strange."

Under the waters they may have gleamed brightly; under the incumbent hills, in shapes more fantastic and more lovely than ever, the transformed corals still glisten for us, and flash back our lights from myriads of crystalline facets.

Far away in the labyrinth of her water-worn gorges has Nature hidden this treasure-casket. Her wild animals knew of it, and sheltered in it many a time, safe there even from the pursuing black fellow, whose superstition peopled the huge caverns with "debbil-debbil" innumerable. Then came man, wilder and more savage still; a bush-ranger, credited with the cold-blooded murder of his own mate, found in these valleys an unsuspecting retreat. Even the first really civilised men that reached the spot, tracking McKewin to his well-chosen lair, and finding in the largest cave marks of his horse's stabling, could think of no better name for it than the "Devil's Coach-house," saying truly enough that if McKewin wasn't the devil in person, he was the best imitation we could look for on earth. Forty-three years have gone since then, and for more than thirty of them little was known of the caves; even six years ago the most beautiful of all still remained undiscovered. For discovery means not only zealous hard work of a most unhealthy kind—lying for hours on one's face in a damp tunnel only large enough to admit the explorer's body, while the hands are constantly chiselling away the limestone from around a narrow crack ahead; not only the intrepid spirit that consents to be lowered into wells sometimes 300 feet deep, running all manner of risks from falling stone and fraying rope and jagged rock-edges, for the delight of

discovering some new store of gems—but also a kind of special genius for divining caves, a talent that leads its possessor to break a way through what was apparently solid formation, and to emerge at last into great open chambers full of fantastic shapes and glittering images. Such patience, such courage, such genius, have been displayed again and again by those who opened up these caves for our enjoyment; and, while we enjoy the fruit of their labours, it is at least befitting that we should pay tribute to their perseverance.

From Sydney we may make choice out of three routes, each possessing its own attractions. Once on the summit of the Blue Mountain Range, we are cut off from the southern valleys by great cliffs of sandstone, known as the Walls, which overlook the Kanimbla Valley; and along the whole line there are but three breaks such as the ordinary tourist would care to avail himself of. At Katoomba a huge cleft (known most unreasonably as Nellie's Glen) is descended by zigzag paths, down which we may ride or lead a horse, and from the bottom a bridle-track winds away for thirty miles, passing a good deal of rough country on the way, and giving inexperienced people a chance to lose themselves—a good many people, indeed, have lost themselves, though a very slight knowledge of bush-tracks would have saved them. Eleven miles further along the railway line, at Mount Victoria, a carriage road plunges down past the head of the Kanimbla, and takes forty miles of wandering to reach the hill-top above McKewin's Creek, from which two miles of bridle-track brings us on foot to the Cave House. The railway itself, by tunnel and zigzag, makes its way down a third gap in the Walls to Lithgow, and so onward to Tarana, whence a third road, thirty-six miles long, leads us by Oberon, and down a splendid zigzag cutting to the Cave House door, coaching it all the way.

So one arrives at last, by one route or another, at the bottom of a gorge from fifteen to eighteen hundred feet deep, and scarcely broad enough for a cricket pitch. Two dried-up creek-beds meet at the point of a long, steep tongue of land, and the hotel stretches itself between them on a narrow flat cut deep into the living rock. On either hand the ground rises sharply in banks of long grass and loose stones, interspersed here and there with ragged trees. Seven hundred feet above us on the right bank (our road has been cut to and fro across the left bank) towers a ruined mass of limestone beyond the tufted grass, a fit spire for the great cathedral within the hill. In front the gorge narrows to the creek-bed, and the creek itself is barred by a sheer precipice, so that the dammed-back water ages ago, chafing against the barrier, wore through it the huge tunnel whose black mouth we see beyond a clump of trees: huge it is, indeed, but in the side of that cliff it seems a mere hole. Descend into it, clamber down past the forge that shelters in its mouth, through the dark passage and its ever-rushing torrent of strong wind, and out into the great hall beyond, where every morning the sunlight flows in over the eastern hills, and lights up stalactite and rocky boulder hanging in the distant roof; or see the whole vast cavern lit at night with cunningly-placed lights high up in the receding walls—lights that play lovingly over the great stone Organ Pipes—and track in the roof an ancient river's bed; then you will forget the dust along the floor, and the huge wooden

platforms that disfigure its sides, and begin to understand that you are near a land of magic.

Let us go further—not by night, because the track is rough and easily missed, but in the early morning, just as the first sunbeams strike in on the piled-up boulders by the lower mouth of this Grand Arch—and climb down among the creepers and bracken towards a sound of running water. It is only about twenty yards from the arch's mouth, behind a lichened crag; there, from a crevice at the foot, wells up the clearest of clear streams, rejoicing after four miles of darkness to see sunlight on the greenery. Just beyond, in a tangled bed of watercress, rises another rivulet,



THE GRAND ARCH.

that now for the first time sees the day. One can trace it through the hills for five miles southward as it runs along in various caves far down below the surface, but here first, as far as we know, does it spring to open air. So the two join and speed away for half-a-mile or so down the valley, among gums, and lightwood, and all the undergrowth of Australian hill-creeks—maiden-hair and the colonial hart's-tongue, bracken and twining blueberry, and thick growth of everlastings; and suddenly, turning a corner, fall over bare rock into a dark, deep pool, with sheer cliff to the right which the rock-lilies crown, and on the left a rock platform that every swimmer among cave-tourists knows well; and so out over a pebbly bar, and through a long, cool avenue of lightwoods towards the eastern rivers and the great ocean.

There is yet another cavern or tunnel in the hills that we may see before we follow our guide into the deep-hidden chambers that are *the Caves*. Standing in the lower entrance of the Grand Arch, we see it to our left, a long slit in the dark stone, which

widens above us as we enter: the floor is strewn with water-worn pebbles, for floods often come down this way. As the passage widens and expands above us, we see far away the northern opening of a vast cave, fringed with delicate-seeming stalactites that might almost swing, one thinks, in the breeze against the distant sky, yet we shall find a fallen one up above which is two or three feet in diameter. This (misnomer of



THE DEVIL'S COACH-HOUSE.

misnomers!) is the Devil's Coach-house—this noble vault, three hundred feet high, and as broad across. Surely we shall find no fiends here, but only the harmless rock-wallaby that haunt every crevice in its walls, and maybe a gaudy parrot that flies backwards and forwards in the heights, having found its way in through a leaf-embowered aperture in the side of the dome. Miserably inappropriate are many of the names that man has plastered on these treasure-chambers, more defacing even than this; for at least there was once a reason for *it*—it recalls the old days of early discovery. But with what disgust must we be filled when some corner of shimmering

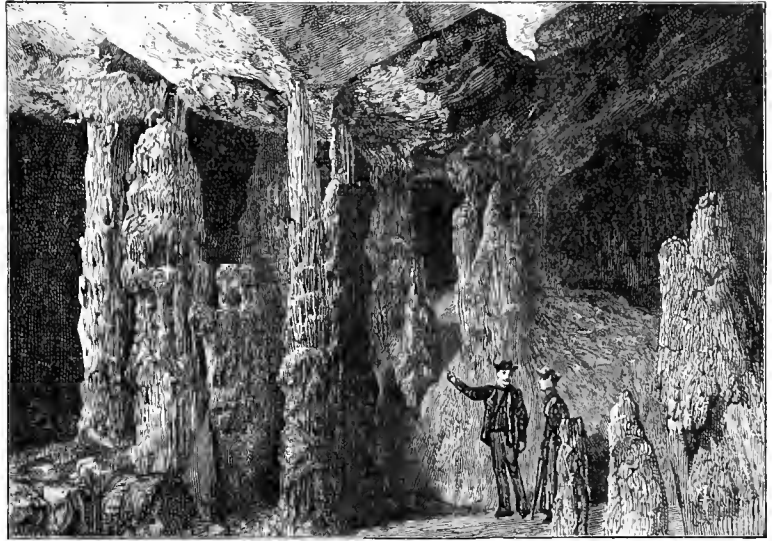
loveliness, some fretted roof covered with crystal pendants, some spreading lake of tiny flashing jewel-waves, has to be connected in our minds with respectable but prosaic names—not by any right of discovery, but in order that influential men may be cheaply complimented by the curator.

Away from the northern end of this huge cavern stretches a narrowing gorge, between hills two thousand feet high. Sometimes a sheer precipice edges the deserted creek-bed; beyond, the hills enclose a grass-flat, shadowed with spreading gum-trees; farther again, the straitened valley is covered with thick scrub, lyre-birds sing invisible on every point, and the sheeny wonga pigeons whirr up into the hillside bushes. Only in flood-time does the creek run above ground; for the greater part of the year it disappears some four miles up the valley, and is only seen by those who venture to explore the many caves of McKewin's Hole. As we turn back through the Coach-house and gain the lower entrance, it is well to glance up towards the right, where, between two walls of dark rock, a grass-green slope looks down from the heights. Above it, springing from wall to rocky wall, is a huge stone arch, a natural bridge, hung with creepers and bordered on its lower edge with fringing stalactites. It is twenty feet thick from crown to keystone, but from below looks scarcely safe to tread on. On it, when we have circuitously laboured up the four hundred feet of stiff climbing, we look down into the winding valley as at a thing very far away; we hear as in a dream the hidden stream and the rustling greenery towards the waterfall, but, looking up, it is almost on our heads, and we make haste to stand out of the way, lest it should fall on us.

So far we have wandered to and fro in the air and the daylight, and could wander for many days amid the surrounding gullies in a maze of lovely scenery. If there is one quality that critic-tourists have striven to fix on Australia it is monotony: their letters are full of the "everlasting gum-tree," their books grow themselves monotonous with reiterated complaint of dull-tinted foliage and unvarying scrub. Two days in these valleys would make them change their mind—a week would alter them into hot converts—so lavishly on hillside and creek-bank has Nature strewn her wealth of blossom and flower-tinted leafage. Every gully has its own beauty. Now we climb among dark cherries and young pine, and tread down the juicy stalks of yellow and crimson orchids, then we cross a turfy saddle and plunge down a treeless slope that waves with long grass, and is gaudy with sweet pea and everlasting; at the bottom, maybe, we shall walk under a cliff of white limestone, edged with stone-slides of a slatier blue, in whose crevices the moss clusters thickly, while rock-lilies sprout on its soft green bed.

The caves themselves are yet to be seen. There are six of them, and each, except the first two, takes from one-and-a-half to two hours to inspect; consequently, at least two days and a half must be given up to them in order to enjoy them thoroughly, since it becomes wearying to visit more than two in one day. For the trip, one adopts the oldest and most compact clothes possible; no ribbons or trimmings must be left hanging to catch on a point of rock. The guide takes his magnesium wire-lamp and a supply of candles, the visitors provide themselves with candlesticks (a peculiar form

is in vogue, with a saucer attached to catch the sperm drippings) and matches, and the procession starts. Down into the mouth of the Grand Arch we wind along, out to its lower entrance, and then, with a sharp leftward turn, mount some half-covered steps to a grating that bars the cave mouth. This is the Nettle Cave. The reason is apparent at once: those tall weeds that edge our stairway can sting with great effect. Our guide opens a gate in the grating, lets us all in, and bars it again. Then the candles are lighted—they will not be much wanted here, but it is as well to get into the routine at once—and we start off down a slope thick with dust. Here the formations are, as a rule, of great size, but covered with an impalpable yellow powder, and quite wanting in brilliancy; they are mutilated, too, to a large extent, by former visitors, excursionists of twenty years ago, who were anxious to keep up their rifle shooting. Presently we come out into daylight in the side of a huge vault, and find ourselves a hundred feet or so up in the southern wall of the Coach-house, with the light streaming down through the summit-hole on masses of fantastic stalagmite: some imitating a lobster's back, others like drooping branches of



NETTLE CAVE.

willow, green with the age-long dropping of rain from above. Herefrom a long flight of wooden stairs leads up to tunnels yet higher in the cliff, still full of dust and wrinkled masses of Nature's statuary: in one recess a huge contorted stalactite waits only the striker to boom forth like a deep-toned cathedral bell. We feel as if we were treading the deserted halls of some ancient castle, from which all the delicate beauty of home and its treasures has long ago fled; the great arches and carved rafters, the tracery of empty windows, alone remain, dust-covered and mutilated, to tell of a far-off grandeur.

Through another grating we come out on a grass slope immediately underneath the Carlotta Arch, and climb by steps to the saddle. The cliffs on either hand are honeycombed with chambers that the wallaby love: by the mouths of some of these chambers you may rake up a heap of leg-bones and lower jaws; nothing else seems to last. We turn sharply round over the right-hand cliff on to the Arch itself, where a pathway two feet wide is railed in along its narrowing ridge, and gain the top of the great limestone embankment, through which a chafing torrent has cut the tunnel of

the Grand Arch. Here, while we view the three gorges from their meeting-place, we see that the most noticeable feature is a pinnacle of crumbling rock that stands up in advance of the cliff, right above the lower entrance of the arch below; joined to its parent rock only at the base, it curves upward and outward over the precipice,



APERTURE IN THE DEVIL'S COACH-HOUSE.

unsupported, ever in preparation to fall. Moving on still to the right, down a staircase of rocks, we find that on the crown of another grassy saddle limestone has cropped out in a new form, a mass of yellow crystals that lie scattered about over the turf. To our right is the upper valley, with the Cave House, three hundred feet or so below; in front rises crag after crag of decaying stone towards the Pinnacle Rock, which towers seven hundred feet above the hotel. Our path zigzags down on the left, past another out-cropping of calcite crystal, into a lovely natural grotto twined all about with creepers. Here is the entrance to the Lucas Cave, guarded as usual with an iron gate; and now we see to our candles with especial care, for we are leaving the daylight for a good two hours. Down into the darkness we go by winding tunnels and stairways, watching the guide's light as it flickers to and fro far below us. At last we reach a

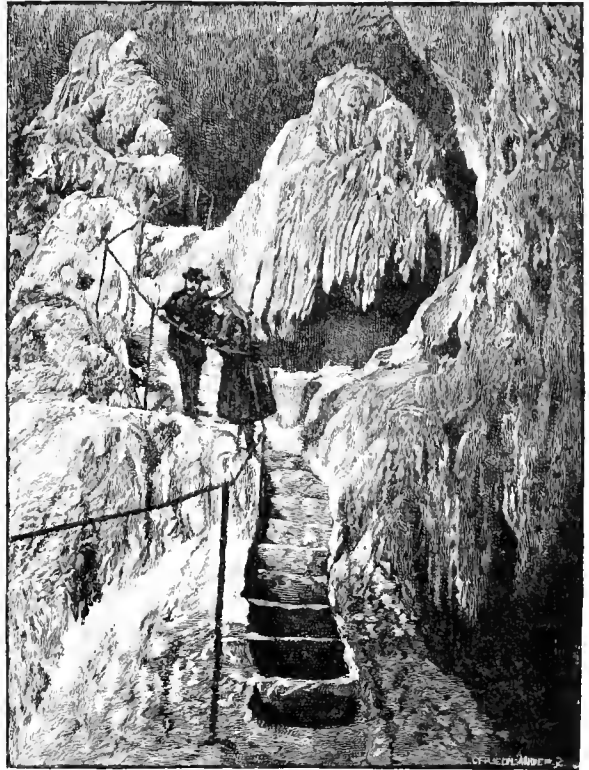
landing, not yet at the bottom of the cave, but broad enough to give room for a party. "Dowse the glims!" is the word; and the candle having been quenched, a tiny blue flame begins to waver in the guide's lamp, and suddenly the wire bursts into a strong, keen flame. Up the rocky walls it flashes, and pierces at last to a nook we can scarcely see. "There is the highest point," says our instructor, "three hundred feet from here," and we try to imagine it, but can only retain a confused impression of mounting smoke and skirring bats and distance.

Then we clamber down through the great Exhibition Hall, with its creamy shawls and delicate lacelike film of curtain, and the strong column that has been broken in twain with the slipping away of its rock support; lower still to the Jewell-casket, where a crevice in the stone hides a myriad topaz-like gems; lower again to the iron bridge, and the silent pool forty feet below it, whose inflowings and outgoings

no man knows; always amid the wildest of wild rock scenery—fallen crags and scattered boulders, masses such as giants might hurl. Wild such a place would be in the sunniest daylight; awful it is when even the magnesium can but faintly illumine its ruggedness, and our candles glimmer through the darkness like glowworms in a stormy night. But at last we come out to the open sky again, and see the valleys covered with a fresher green, the flowers tinted with more brilliant hues.

The Elder Cave, which one reaches by a ladder let down into a pit some fifteen feet deep, is so called from an elder-tree that grows at its mouth, and fills almost the whole circle of the well with its exuberant foliage. Here the path is even more rugged, for artificial aids are wanting. Now and again one comes upon a piece of real climbing, such as ladies do not love. Grand it is certainly, but so is the Lucas Cave; and of those who visit it, more enjoy the delights of scrambling than the beauty of the formation. Yet at its lower end there is a sight that one can view nowhere else: between the approaching roof and floor of a far-extended chamber, coralline branches of a delicate pink cover the whole face of the rock, and meet at the further end in a tangle of glimmering light and shade.

From this cave we clamber down by a cleft, where rocks have fallen away in ruin, to the last and best of the series, the Imperial Caves. We are following as nearly as possible the original discoverer's path, for it was down this cleft, a little farther on, that "Jerry" Wilson, the curator, was lowered a hundred feet or so to pick up his lost smoking-cap, and so broke into the inmost jewel-house of all the hills. Long narrow tunnels branch off here into the very heart of the mountain, widening out ever and again into glittering chambers hung all over with crystalline pendant and wavy "shawl," sometimes floored with a lake of the tiniest imaginable gems, that seem to rise and ripple as the light plays over them. Passing by a rock-shelf covered with such sugary-



STEPS IN NETTLE CAVE.

looking forms as to give it the name of the Confectioner's Shop, we see in the middle of our path a tall white stalagmite more than five feet high, standing quite alone in the black tunnel, semi-transparent, lovely. Beyond, in a recess below the path, the walls and streets and statues of a city lie designed in miniature; and not far away,

as if to contrast sharply with this underground Lilliput, huge columns of seeming alabaster, as thick through as a man's body, rise some fifteen feet to the roof, and lose themselves in a tissue of draperies and cunningly devised stone lacework. Down another branch one watches the magnesium light flashing with redoubled brilliancy from every facet on the "Diamond Wall," and walks through a long passage where the dark rock is completely hidden by the multitude of gleaming tongues that hang from every point of the roof, and of growing pillars that spring in forests from the floor. And so there comes into view a new wonder, of all these water-formed fantasies the most fantastic: by a narrow neck of hardened lime there hangs from the roof a mass of stalactite, like an inverted mushroom; but we see none of the mass, because all round it and over it the dropping water has left intertwining threads of glass-like purity and transparency, that branch out in numberless twigs and tendrils, some shooting up, some darting straight out into the air, all inextricably tangled in a shimmering maze of brightness. Truly enough is it called the Gem of the West.

There is another branch of the Imperial Caves higher up in the hill, where galleries run for a long way directly above the right-hand branch. Entering from the Grand Arch, where wooden ladders lead up to a narrow hole in the side of the lower entrance, we pass rapidly along a winding tunnel, nearly every step of which has been hewn out by man's labour; for the road down the Elder Cave was rough and tedious, and as soon as possible after the first discovery guides were at work from the inside forcing a passage through the rocks to daylight. The straightforward tunnel runs to the caves we have already seen: for the left branch we turn up a stairway cut in stone, and climb, with the help of more ladders, into the upper galleries. Here are the Architect's Studio, whose grey Gothic arches would adorn any cathedral, and the Helena Cave, where the Madonna and Child stand—a natural statue—under a pearl-white canopy. Here, by snaky crawling, and not without much rending of garments, one may attain to the Pearl Cave (for "Wilkinson" is a late intruder in names), and see the Niagara of crystal, the foam-white Snowdrift, that seems always in act of melting away, and the fantastic vagaries of the Old Curiosity Shop. Here, passing through the Lucinda Cave, whose walls are one continual sparkle, we descend by many steps to the vast chamber that they call Katie's Bower, draped with marvellous airy tissues of pink and mauve and cream-colour, and curtained with heavier robes of every shade of brown, where in the farthest corner always lies a pool of coldest water, so pure, so clear, that one could never see where water ended and air began were it not for the mirrored gleam of a thousand overhanging crystals.

And in this inexhaustible wonderland—for what we have seen is nothing to what lies still hidden in the heart of the hills, unapproachable save to the daring and enthusiastic—there is yet a wonder of a different kind left for us to behold. Just off one of the lower tunnels opens a well-like hole, down which, by the help of a long wire ladder, we may plunge. At the bottom a descending gallery leads us by dusty paths to the murmur of a stream—into it, indeed, unless with lowered candle we search carefully for the current's edge. Up along the banks winds our procession to the edge of a deep pool, where the stream has widened from steep wall to wall. "Dowse the

glins!" is again the command. We sit waiting in the dark, fanned by a cold wind. Then the strong light shines out over the water: in the clear depths we see every ledge of rock, every drop hanging from the jagged roof, mirrored without a flaw. Up stream the pool disappears into thickest gloom, undisturbed except for a tiny fish that darts to and fro among the crevices; below we hear the distant plashing of rapids, which way the channel leads out to the lower valley and the trees and the sunlight. We have left the gleam and glitter far above, and know at least for a moment what manner of place is the "deep of the earth."



ROAD TO THE FISH RIVER CAVES.

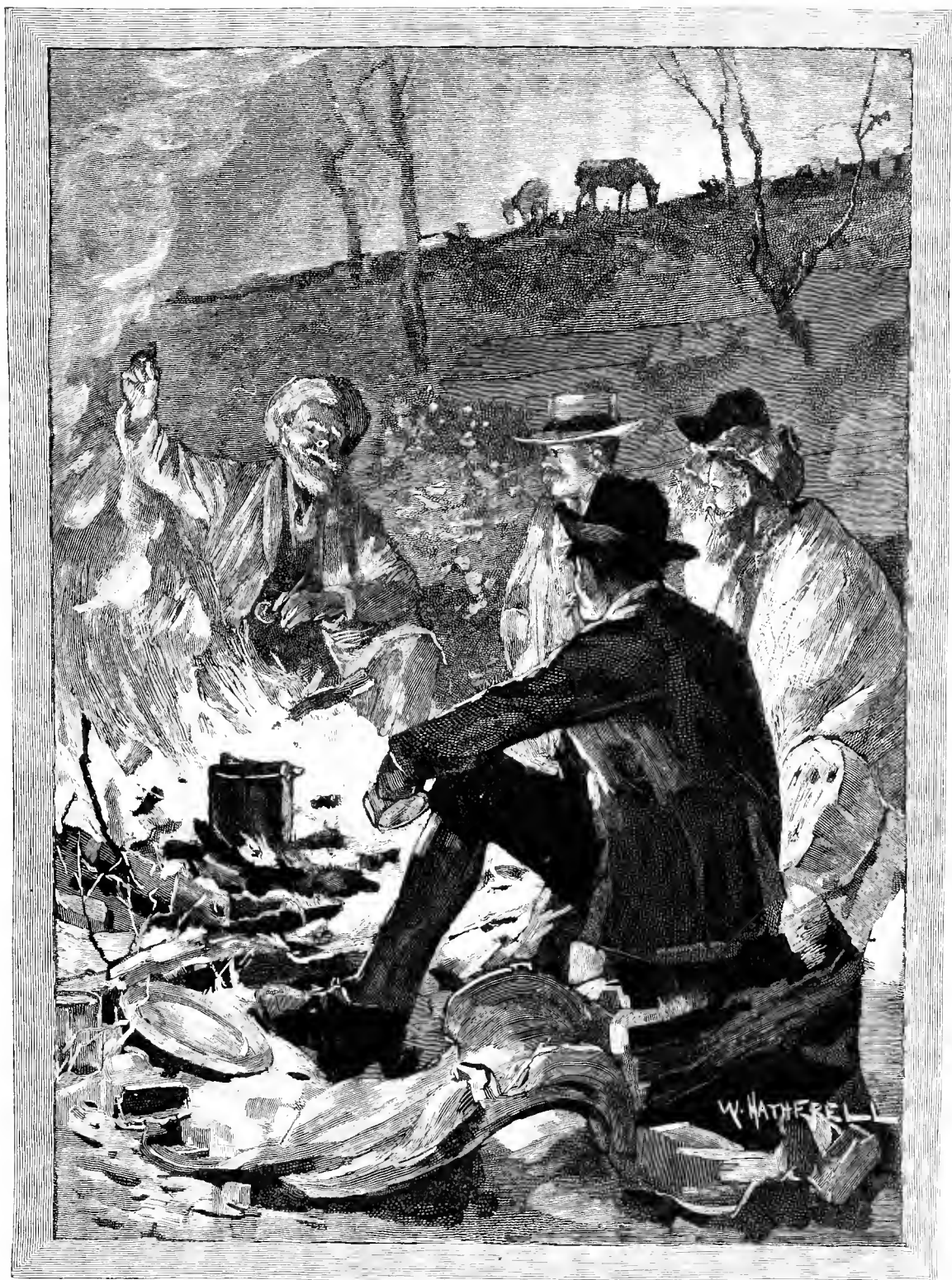
A QUEENSLAND BULLOCK-DRIVER'S ADVENTURES.

Drought!—Death-Traps—Wells—The Throes of Death—"Raising the Wind"—"Demon"—"Cutting Out"—*En Route*—Rain at Last—Crossing a River—Touch and Go—Another Swim—A Timely Bargain—A "Rush"—Off for Help—Floods—To the Rescue—At Last!

THE drought held the whole land in its iron grasp, the paddocks were absolutely bare, and all over a vast cattle-run there was nothing but a few isolated patches of rank, dried-up grass. In the scrub the men were employed in felling the edible trees, and on these the strong cattle maintained a precarious existence, whilst the weak ones fell, never to rise again, and the stench of their carcasses polluted the air. But whilst the trees and dried-up grass afforded a bare subsistence, of water there was none. Three years had passed since the creeks had run, and one by one the water-holes had shrunk up and dried, leaving only a deposit of deep mud and slush, in which pitfalls cattle and horses were bogged by hundreds. There lay the horses, patient in death, with their legs finally embedded in the mud, their heads drooping to the earth, and only the widening nostrils and quivering body telling that life was not yet extinct. On the bank, the terrified foal had whinnied out in famished tones its little life, and its dead carcase seemed to ask the question, "Why was I born? to what end all this suffering?" But terrible to hear was the piteous lowing of the bogged cattle. With bones sticking up under their skin, and eyes wide open and full of entreaty, they called incessantly to their mates, and these would crowd round the steep banks and look down on the hole where they had been wont to drink and bathe their limbs through the heat of the day in fresh, cool waters; but now, with famished eyes, they stared down on a shiny pool of dead and dying. But at last their parched tongues thirsted even for a taste of this water, and one would make a start forward, and begin slowly to descend the steep bank. The others followed, but there was no gaiety, no gambols, no playful horning: it was a solemn funeral procession, the living and the dead pledging one another in one long sickening draught. And now, with a plunge and a snort, they are coming out. At every step they bog up to their knees, and only the strong ones are able to plunge themselves free, and, exhausted and unrefreshed, at last stand on the bank.

Why were not such pitfalls fenced in? I hear the reader ask. So they were, as fast as men could do it, and yet it was not fast enough. And wells were being sunk, permanent ones and temporary ones, the permanent ones seventy, eighty, or one hundred feet deep, at an average cost of £1 a foot for the first thirty feet, and up to £2 a foot afterwards: and in many cases water was never reached, while, in others, when reached, it was brackish and useless. The temporary wells were holes dug in the bed of the creek, slabbed to keep the sides from falling in. The water was drawn up in buckets, and emptied into troughs made of big trees felled and scooped out so as to hold the water.

All creation was groaning in the throes of death, from the flowers of the field to the tall trees, which sent their roots fathoms deep into the earth in vain search



"ROUND THE ROARING FIRE" (p. 110).

for moisture. The birds were dying of the drought, as they do of famine in the old country during heavy snow; and so parched were they that when they saw water they forgot their shyness and their dread of man, and flocked to drink at the feet of the men as they dug the wells or watered the cattle. The troughs were lined with rows of glorious parrots; the branches of the trees all round were laden with birds of all sizes, the rarest and shyest casting away its fear before the compulsion of thirst; and the air was alive with their quaint calls—the tinkle of the bell-bird, the chatter of the leather-heads, the sweet harmony of the butcher-bird.

The cattle hung with stupid, sullen despair round their old watering-places, and day by day had to be driven and coaxed into watering at the troughs. But handling over 20,000 head of cattle in such an emergency was no easy matter, and this was the third year of the drought. Money had all the time been going out and nothing coming in, for both horses and cattle were too weak to bear, or when they did bear, their offspring mostly died.

“I think, Jack, in spite of the mobs we have already sent away, we could still muster a small mob of store bullocks, say 300, and you might take charge and push away south. Smith sold a thousand head last week in that part of the country, and I should like to try our luck; for, besides the necessity of ‘raising the wind,’ it would all help to ease the run, and, ‘pon my word, we shall not have a hoof left if rain does not come soon.”

The mustering began, and out of every mob of cattle the bullocks were draughted and tailed apart, until about 350 were collected. Oh! what glorious weather it was to work in! We were in mid-winter: the mornings and evenings fresh and cool, the days warm and bright, and from day to day never a single cloud. The sun rose in an unbroken glow of pink, and went down in an unbroken glow of primrose. And the nights, bright with moon and stars, when the labours of the day were over, and we gathered round the roaring fire; how excellent our damper and salt meat tasted, and how we slept! The night seemed far too short, and yet we slept on the hard ground; the white hoar-frost fell on us, and warned us not to let the fires grow too low. Then came the day before the start; the bullocks were all to be put on the camp and looked over, and those unfit to face the journey cut out. We were short of horses; the hard work during the muster had told on them all, and they did not thrive on the corn as they did on their native grass.

“Who is game to ride Demon?” cried the manager’s voice. There was silence for a second, and then a tall, lanky Queenslander answered, without looking up or betraying the slightest animation, “I don’t mind.” “Very well, Dick—saddle up; the sun will be over the hill in another minute.” Demon is saddled; but before the rider is well into the saddle Demon has arched his back, and stands out against the sky shaped like a cat about to spring; the next instant Dick is on the ground, and Demon speeding over the plain. Dick picks himself up with a good-humoured grin, and prepares to move after his horse. “That was not fair play, Dick; you did not have time to get into the saddle. Try again.” Now he has mounted again, and Demon, who has enjoyed the ease with which he threw him the first time, is

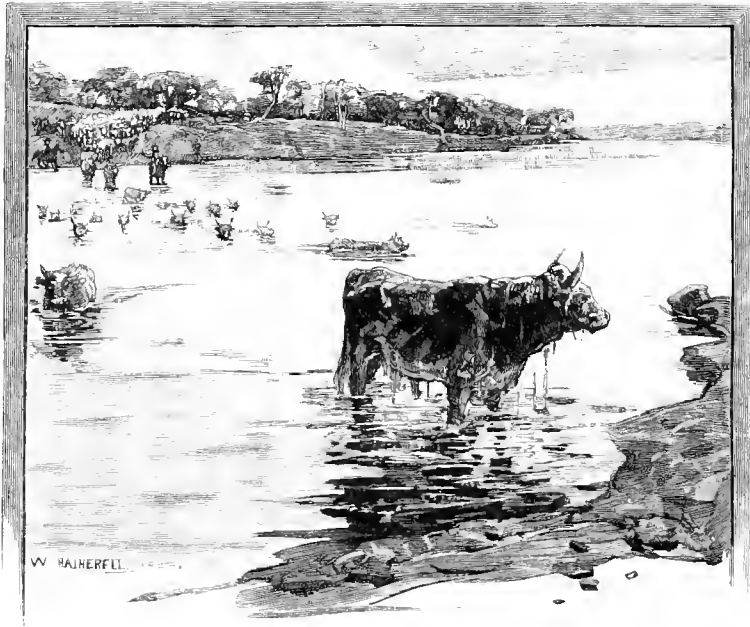
surprised that he cannot dislodge him now. He began to buck in playfulness because it was a cold morning, and it was fun to make everyone afraid to ride him; but, as he finds it impossible to shift his rider, he grows angry, and throws himself down on the ground, but he is only rewarded by a sharp cut of the whip, and he rises with his rider still seated on his back. "Well done, Dick! Bravo! Stick hard!" Demon's back arches again, his head is down between his legs, and his hind-quarters lowered, so that he is almost as round as a ball. He rises into the air with a series of quick springs: he spins round like a tectotum, until his rider sees stars. By his exertions he has loosened the girths of the saddle, and things begin to look serious. But he has found his master, and, as suddenly as he began, he leaves off bucking, and walks quietly away. The Queenslander raises his head, and a glance of triumph shoots out of his keen blue eyes; he says nothing, but "How I mastered Demon" will become one of his stock camp stories.

The cattle camp was a small plain, and the mob of bullocks were rounded up in a close mass on one side of it. Two of the best riders were told off to "cut out;" and as pretty a piece of horsemanship as the world can show may be seen on a Queensland cattle camp. Yes! it is a fine sight to see rider and horse in perfect touch with one another—turning, twisting, going at racing speed, then suddenly stopping dead short, as the beast they are after doubles and turns. See them ride into the mob; there is no hurry or haste, but quietly and determinedly they single out the beast which has to be draughted out. The beast objects, and refuses to leave its mates; it attempts to get into the main mob and get lost, as it thinks, amongst the crowd. But a stockman knows his beast at a glance, as clearly as he discerns the faces of his own children; he blocks the bullock at every turn, and at last has pushed him out to the edge of the mob. Now the race has begun; the horse and the bullock race neck to neck. In vain the bullock twists and turns, first to this side, then to that; his antagonist is always equal to him. Occasionally a beast gets hot, and charges, and then it becomes very dangerous work; but the bush inures men to danger, and they learn to meet it, in whatever shape it comes, with a steady nerve.

Store bullocks are by law obliged to travel at the rate of six miles a day, but for the first three days after our start we had to do fifteen a day, and even so the bullocks during one stage were two days and two nights without a drink. It was terrible work, driving during the drought, pushing and pressing cattle forward when they were almost too weak to walk, and were hungry and half-starved. I must not linger over every detail, or I could fill a volume with the hardships endured during that trip by both man and beast. Of grass there was not one blade, and the cattle subsisted entirely on shrubs, especially the mulga, of which there was a good supply. One bullock we had we nicknamed the "Champion;" through the thick of it all he kept his condition, and thrived where others starved. He was always in the lead—always the first to see a tempting morsel. He had a twisted horn, which he wound round the trees, and drew them down until they were within reach of his mouth. After he had got the tree down, he had to

defend his prey from the other bullocks; but he took care to lose no time by eating, but filled his mouth, and then turned to butt away his aggressors, returning to his food with the speed of lightning. Eight or ten smaller bullocks always followed in the "Champion's" wake, in the hope of being allowed a morsel or two, and to these satellites he was especially kind, never butting them away unless they were rash enough to press in front of him.

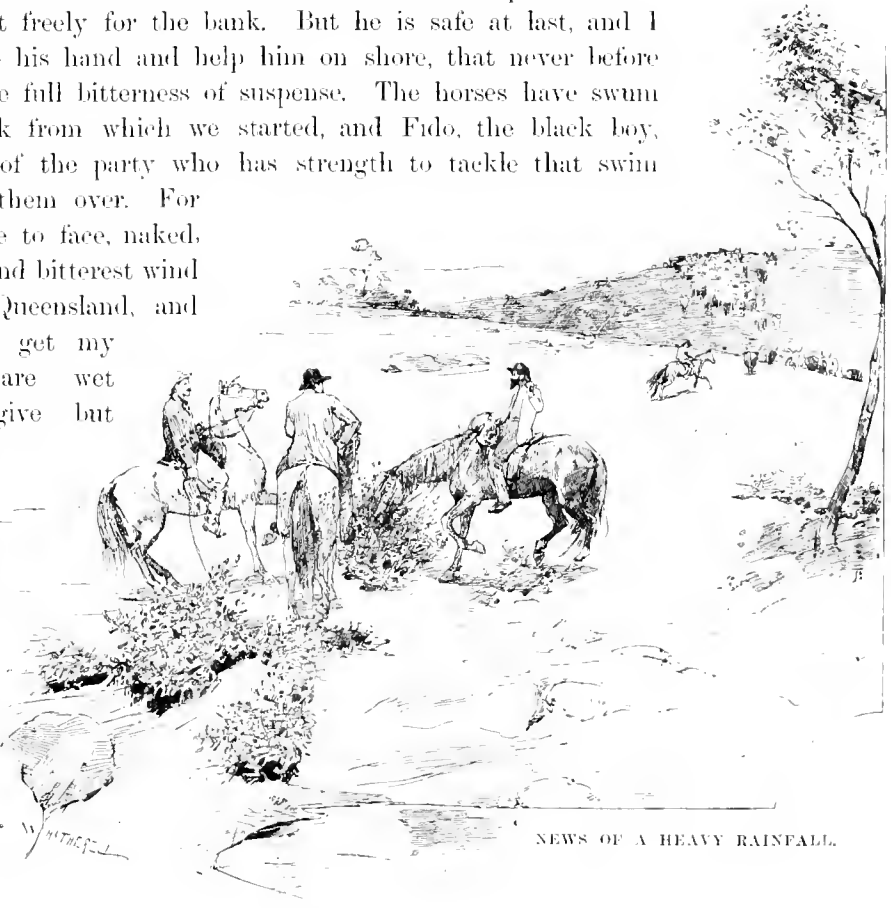
We had been some twelve days on the road when we first learnt from a traveller



CROSSING THE WARREGO.

that heavy rain had fallen in the direction in which we were travelling. We had heard the words "The drought has broken up" so often during the last few years that we were very sceptical as to the amount of rain we should meet with, but any change from the everlasting drought was cheering, and we pushed along more gaily. Soon we found that the drought had broken up in very truth, and that the rain was still falling. On reaching the banks of the Warrego, I found a great wide lake, four miles across. Never can I forget the sight of that vast flood, or the dismay that it caused us. At the "touraines" or junctions, where several channels diverged, to run a few miles down and then join the main river again, the water roared and surged and rushed. To attempt to cross there would be madness; across the full breadth of the main river no one could hope to swim a mob of cattle; there was, therefore, no choice but to take it below a "touraine," and we tackled it at a place where we had two channels and the main river to cross. All day it took us to put the cattle across, and a fine sight it was to see over 300 head of bullocks breasting the current, nothing but their heads and horns showing above the waters. The

last bullock has scrambled up the bank, and now myself and one of the other men have to face the swirling current of the main river. We are both exhausted by our long day's work, but I jump off my horse and strip, fastening my clothes securely to the pommel of my saddle. My companion refuses to follow my example; the wind is biting, and at any rate, he says, his shoulders will remain warm. In vain I urge him, if he will do nothing else, to remove his great coat. He shakes his head doggedly, and side by side we enter the water. Two strides, and the horses are carried off their legs, and swimming gallantly against the fearful current. But both horses have been exhausted by their previous swims, and my companion's has just more than he can carry. I see him splash and flounder, and then go under; the next instant he rises to the surface, just under the nose of my horse. A plunge, a desperate struggle, and I sink: is it all over, and am I dead? No! I rise to the surface; I am within an ace of my horse; I clutch at the bridle, and try to cling to the mane and swim beside the horse, but he plunges again. Once more I spin under, and hear the water singing in my ears, and feel its stifling embrace, but again I rise and strike out for the bank. Fortunately I am not encumbered with clothes. I have no eyes, no thought, except for myself, and it is not until I have reached the bank, and stand safely upon it, that I turn my eyes to look for my companion. He is having a hard tussle for life, for his clothes bear him down, and prevent him from striking out freely for the bank. But he is safe at last, and I think, as I grasp his hand and help him on shore, that never before had I known the full bitterness of suspense. The horses have swum back to the bank from which we started, and Fido, the black boy, is the only one of the party who has strength to tackle that swim again, and fetch them over. For six hours I have to face, naked, the coldest rain and bitterest wind I ever felt in Queensland, and when at last I get my clothes they are wet through, and give but cold comfort. Everything was wet, and it had been with the greatest difficulty that we had kept our rations dry. We had brought them over the rivers in a canvas boat,



NEWS OF A HEAVY RAINFALL.

improvised with six yards of waterproof canvas, into which three pack-saddles were turned topsy-turvy; the ends of the canvas were then rolled up, and secured tightly with a strap.

It was dusk by the time we regained our horses and rode up to the cattle, to find two of the men shivering with fever and ague, and unable to sit on their horses. We carried them off to bed, and divided the remainder of our forces; one man remaining to mind the cattle, and myself and one other returning to the river to look after the "swags," and put the rations in a safe place. It was still raining, and quite dark. We found the river rising fast, and saw that no time must be lost in shifting our things. My boots had been lost in the river, and as I found it impossible to walk without them, I trudged over to a carrier's camp and borrowed a pair from him. They were too large for me, and added greatly to my miseries, for I kept losing first one, then the other, in the mud, and had to stop and search for it in the dark. When we had put all our things in safety we had to return to the cattle and take our turn at watching, and thankful indeed were we when the morning dawned bright and fair, and that miserable night had come to an end. We should have liked to remain in camp that day to dry our things and rest a bit, but it was absolutely necessary to push the cattle on, for it was sheer starvation to keep them where they were.

We turned our backs, then, on the floods of the Warrego, and after wading through a mile of mud and slush, found ourselves confronted with another swim. I was hesitating what to do, for at least thirty head out of my mob were too utterly knocked up to be able to swim across, and it was a question whether to leave them behind, or stay behind altogether, in the hope that the waters of the creek might go down, and give us a footing across. As I was in this perplexity I was hailed by a horseman on the other side of the creek, and after some parley he asked if I had any cattle for sale? I answered that I had some thirty head to dispose of. The bargaining was all done by shouting across the creek, and no small effort was it to make our voices heard above the roar of its waters, but the long and short of it was that I sold thirty bullocks for 57s. a head, and very well pleased was I with my bargain. Leaving behind me the cattle I had sold, I put the rest of the mob across the creek, and pitched our camp early, in the hope of getting some rest. The day had been terribly hot, the sun had drawn the green grass out of the earth as if by magic, and although there was as yet nothing much for the cattle to eat, there was a splendid promise. Towards evening we heard distant thunder, and as dusk closed in it became very oppressive. The cattle refused to settle on their camp, and were so restless that we were kept moving round them all the time. The thunder came nearer and nearer, and at last the storm burst right over our heads. The lightning was so vivid that night was turned into day, and the quick flashes showed the mob of bullocks all huddled together—the men on horseback—the long line of dark scrub; and then the whole picture was swallowed up into the darkest night. And now like the crack of doom came a peal of thunder, such as never in my life had I heard before. It rolled sullenly up and burst over our heads rat-a-tat-tat-bang-bang! Was that all thunder, or did I hear something else besides? My hesitation was but

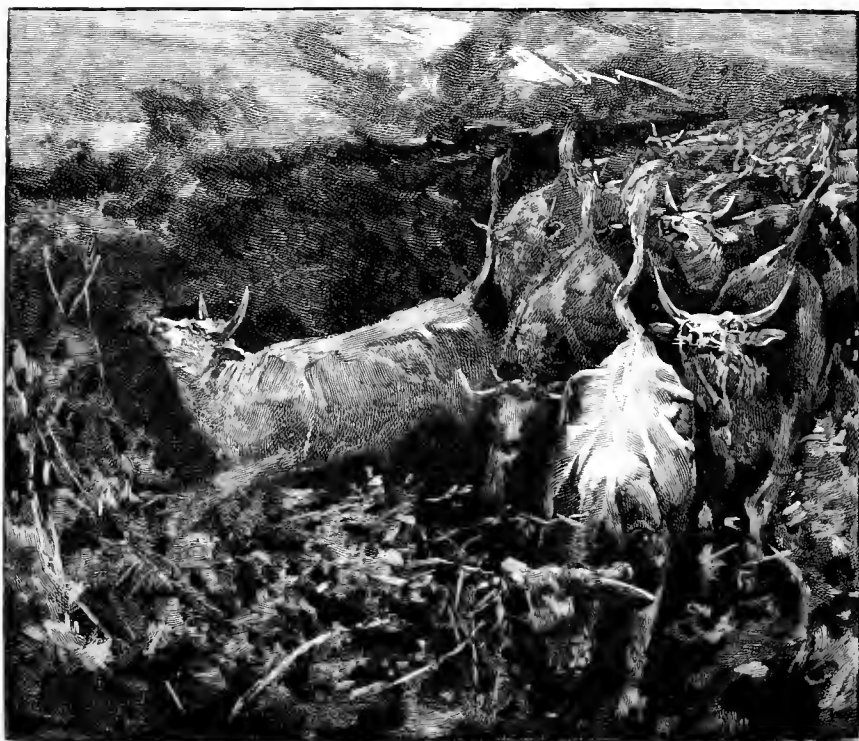
momentary, for the next instant a vivid flash of lightning showed me the mob of bullocks tearing away across the scrub. Who that has once heard the rush of a mob of cattle can ever think without emotion of the sound?

"The cattle have rushed!" is the cry from lip to lip, and away towards the scrub we go. "Who can catch them up? Who can head them?" The wild excitement of such a gallop as this none who have not been present can ever know. The storm is forgotten, the darkness is forgotten, the dangers that press round every footstep are accounted as nothing; the thunder of the rushing cattle alone sings in your ears, and it is of them only that you think. They have entered the scrub, and are sweeping down everything in front of them, and the crash of the timber adds to the horrors of the moment. The scrub is even darker than the plain, but we scarcely alter our speed. Do not ask me how I rode through that scrub on that fearful night, but ask my horse, for to him belongs the glory of rounding that mob of cattle. Ah! Caesar, old man, when the last moment came, and you headed the leaders, what a mad five minutes that was, when, in order not to be crushed to death, I pressed your smoking flanks and urged you forward, and shrieked with all my power the wild "Woa back! woa back!" and when we felt the cattle steady, and knew that their mad career was stopped, whose heart was beating loudest, yours or mine? And when morning dawned, and I saw the track through which you had so gallantly carried me, did I not swear to you that no gold should ever soil my hands as price for you, but that you and I should remain faithful mates for life? The cattle had rushed for about a mile and a half through the scrub in a long line, some eight abreast, and had swept everything down, so that it looked like a made road.

We pushed on, and had no more rain until the night we camped in front of a large creek just beside the Ward river. It looked cloudy at sunset, but we were incredulous as to more rain falling, and as it was a better camp on the side on which we were, we decided not to cross the creek until morning. But in the night the rain came down, not ordinary rain, but sheets of falling water, and when morning broke the creek was a "swim." Crossing it, we found ourselves in a vast scrub of low mulga bushes, which stretched between the creek and the river. The rain fell all day in torrents; the Ward was flooded in front of us, the creek behind us, and the water was soon knee-deep everywhere, and rations ran short. Leaving the cattle on the driest camp we could pick for them, I pushed up to a station five miles up the river, in the hope of obtaining some rations, but they refused either to give or to sell. The whole country was under water; they might run short of provisions themselves, and Heaven only knew when they would be able to get more, for within the memory of white man never had such floods been seen. Empty-handed, weary, and discouraged, I had to wade for five miles through water and slush back to the camp. The next morning it was still raining, and it being quite impossible to put the cattle over the Ward, I determined to start off for Charleville and get some rations. What was left I divided before starting amongst the men who remained behind with the cattle. It consisted of one small piece of meat, one small slice of bread each, and about enough tea to make three quarts.

The only possible crossing-place was at the station which I had visited on the previous day, so I pushed back there. You could not hope to cross the river on horseback; it was as much as the horse could manage to do to get over himself. I put my horses in first, and when I saw them safely across and landed on the other bank, I proceeded to cross myself along two wires strained through posts above usual high water, one to walk upon, the other to hold on by, waist deep in the water, and the cold so terrible that my teeth chattered as if I had ague. From there to Charleville was twenty-five miles, water all the way, and deep mud where the water was not standing. It was eleven o'clock at night when I rode into Charleville. It was raining hard, and all that night the rain came down in a deluge.

The next day, rain, rain, rain, cold, cold, and floods everywhere. In every direction from the trees round the town came coo-ees, coo-ees, of distress from people who had escaped drowning by taking refuge up the trees. Above the waters, dotted about, the roofs of some of the houses were just visible, otherwise all, as far as the eye could see, was a vast expanse of water. There was one good boat in the town, and all day



A "RUSH."

that was at work rescuing people. The river was still rising, and I was mad with anxiety. What had become of my men? What had become of the cattle? Dusk was just falling, when the news came that some people were cooe-ing from a clump of trees

close to the town. The boat was just being tied up, but they loosened it again, and determined to make one more trip. The boat contained seven men, but they had all been at work for hours, and four of them had had too much liquor. They put off, and made for the direction in which the cries were heard. In a tree they found one kanaka, one policeman, two black "gins," and a child. They got them safely into the boat, but the current was terribly strong, and the danger from drifting logs very great. They needed all their wits, and half the boat's crew were useless. An overhanging tree caught them, and the boat got wedged so tightly that it was impossible to shove her off. Meanwhile, the floods were rising fast, and the boat, unable to rise with the waters, soon filled and sank. The tree in which they had caught was a small one, with no room for eleven persons to cling to; however, they all got on to it, except one of the "gins," an old

woman who could not climb. The kanaka tied a rope to her waist, and the men in the tree tried to pull her up, but she fell, and was at once swept away by the waters. The policeman (a black fellow), jumped in after her, and struck out boldly for a bit, but the current was too strong for him, and he had to take refuge in a tree. The cold that night was bitter. They saw him clinging to the tree until eleven o'clock, then drop off into the water, to be carried away into silence.

All night the people in the town worked without intermission at a raft, for their only boat was now gone, and still the waters were rising. One man set to work to patch up a little dingey. It was such a rotten little thing that the water came in everywhere, and all hands laughed at him, and told him he was wasting his time. But he worked away steadily all night, "for," said he, "your raft is so large, and the current so strong, that you will never fetch the tree, and those chaps must be rescued before the cold of



AN INUNDATION.

early dawn sweeps them away." The morning dawned, the raft was launched, and was quickly carried by the flood against a submerged house. It caught in the verandah, and could not be dislodged. Then the owner of the crazy little dingey took his little craft a mile up above the tree he wanted to fetch, and one by one rescued every soul. Bravo, stranger! the remembrance of your gallantry that day will live in more hearts than one.

All that day I had to sit and watch the rising waters, and consume my soul with the agony of not knowing what had become of my men or of the cattle. In the evening the waters began suddenly to abate, and the floods subsided with great rapidity. The following morning I paid a man a sovereign to put me and my rations across the river. On all sides I was entreated to remain another day, and told that, even if I landed safely myself, I should lose my horses; and, indeed, the poor brutes had a hard tussle for it, for they were swimming about in the water a full hour before they could find footing.

At last I reached the cattle. The men had had absolutely nothing to eat but opossum since I left them. Two other starving men had joined them that morning, and these had to have a share of the slender rations I had been able to bring. Four days afterwards we began to move. The cattle were weak and done up with cold and wet, and the whole country was one vast sheet of bog, the like of which I never saw. The first part of our journey had been all drought, now it was all floods. At last the grass begins to grow, and we are saved.

Telegram to the manager of A—— station:—"Cattle sold. £4 10s. a head. I return at once with the horses."



VICTIMS OF FLOOD.

WITHIN THE GREAT BARRIER REEF.

Leaving Keppel Bay—Beneath the Waters—The Zamia—A Swarm of Islands—Port Denison—A Land of Thirst—Rival Towns—Cairns—The Barron River and Falls—Townsville—Snapper Island—Mount Peter Botte—Cape Melville—A City of the Dead—Cape Flinders—A Pelican in Difficulty—A Lightship—Albany Pass—Thursday Island—Pearl Fishing—Its Dangers and Delights.

LEAVING Keppel Bay, with its golden shores, the distant ranges of mountains half obscured by mist and rain, we steam along within sight of steep headlands, clouds half covering their tops and foam lashing against their rocky feet, and of hills covered with trees except where huge cliffs and bare boulders stand out broken up into deep fissures: a terrible coast for vessels to be cast upon. We pass Peak Island, and also the Clara group, that start up abruptly from the waters like great stones flung down by giants, the misty mainland of Queensland beyond them forming the background. Our steamer pitches about in such violent fashion that at last I am only kept on deck by my strong determination to see and take note of all the points of interest. This was the first time since leaving England that I had been really sea-sick, or, at least, had been forced to confess myself so.

Next morning the sun broke out, between showers, and the waters became quieter, for we were within the Great Barrier Reef of coral, which will guard us from rough waves until we reach Thursday Island. The water under us is of a beautiful cobalt-green tint, caused, probably, by its shallowness and the white reefs which lie underneath. Lovely coral and shells are here found—large claw-like cradles with rainbow tints over them, great flesh-coloured shells, branches of scarlet and of snow-white coral, delicate in tracery as flower-skeletons, mosses, or tender seaweed. Away over the land, which is never out of sight, the sun-shafts pierce the mist-veils and show rust-stained iron-stone, in some parts bleached; rich green banks, where the grasses and ferns thickly cover up the bare, hard rocks; pine, palm, and zamia trees, mingling among the Queensland gums that cluster up the mountain sides until hidden by the clouds which lie along the sky like flat ridges, or come down like white smoke into the deep gullies. Where the sun lights up the colours, they are russet and olive mixed with bright green; and where the folds of the ranges overlap, or the clouds advance, or the funnel-smoke makes shadows, you see deep and intense purple. The pale sea-green, snowy foam-curdles, and the mellow sky overhead, ever changing as the tropic rains gather about, make up a perfect feast of colour. The rocks and headlands, too, are ever varying in form as we approach and pass them. A long island, at first sight precipitous and narrow, alters its shape until what seemed rugged boulders becomes fringes of semi-tropical trees. Not yet are we amid the entirely tropical verdure, although the zamia palma is a nearer approach to it than the grass trees further south.

The zamia seems an intermediate tree between the fern and the palm; and the specimens which I have seen were small. The pith makes a nourishing food for travellers who have run short of other provisions, while on the outside there grows a kind of fur,

which the natives gather for bedding, a good substitute for flock, and, perhaps, healthier to lie upon.

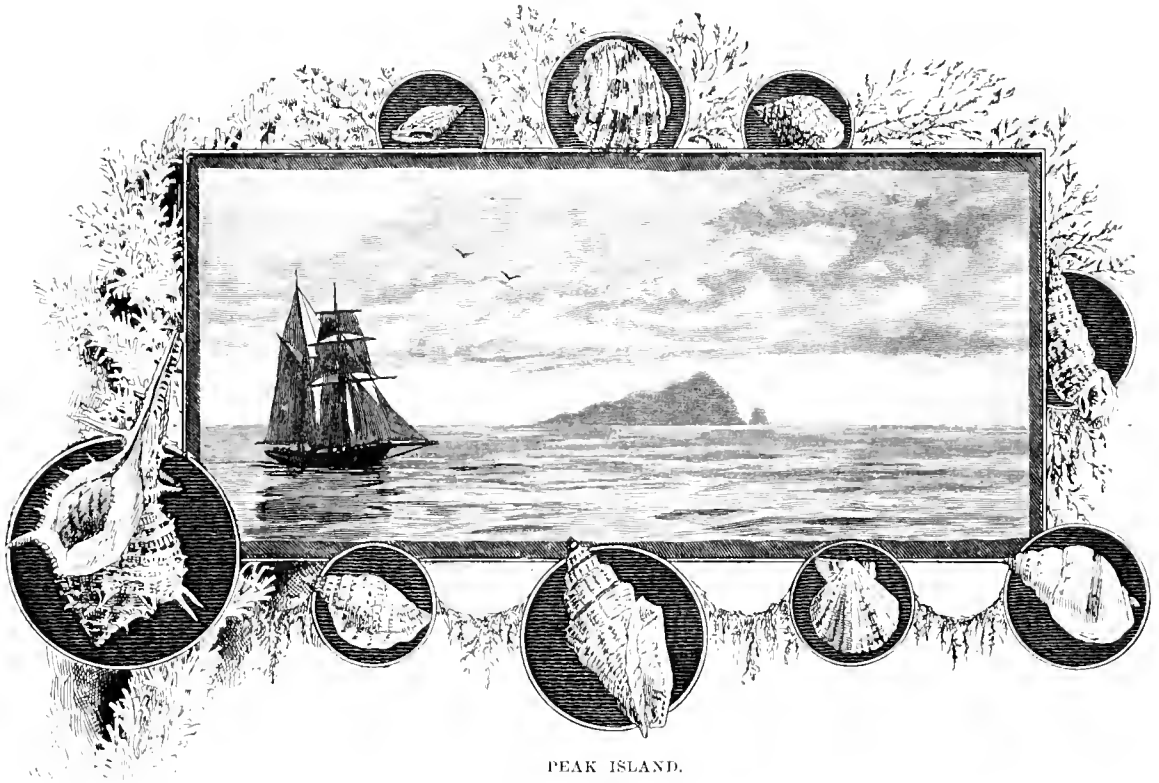
Every day as we progress towards the most northern point of Queensland the weather is becoming warmer and the air more conducive to repose—skies with the softest indication of azure; water sparkling like emeralds and sapphires as the shadow crosses the sunshine and makes tracks of purple amidst the delicious light green; headlands floating away to faint blue-grey, velvet folds against the mellow creamy clouds whose violet sides pile up behind them. These headlands become more definite as we draw near, showing their cones, peaks, or rounded sides, looking, where they are grass-covered, like old-gold plush shot with bronze-green. They have shadow-sides of brown-grey and hollows of funny purple in the parts where the dense scrub covers all behind the line of tree-edge. Here and there white columns of smoke rising up thickly, and drifting lazily northwards to join the bank of clouds, show us that the blacks still possess and occupy that land, so silent in the distance.

Islands start up innumerable—to the pilot all landmarks, not a few of them scenes of disaster and of death, for as yet this seems to be the only history of those smiling headlands and verdant isles. One point has become famous through a brutal murder by natives, on the spot where a vessel went ashore and many lives were lost.

It is forenoon as we draw near to George Point, Saddleback Island, and the bold outlines of Cape Gloucester, the outside point of Gloucester Island. A rain-cloud is passing over the sun, so that those boulder cliffs, grassy slopes, and shady trees might well pass for a bit of home scenery. Mingled with the sparkling lights and cool tones, purple lines of shadow lie on the water, and over the shadow a vessel is tacking, her sails gleaming white. High up the sides of the mountain the white clouds are rolling, breaking, and dissolving in wreath-like steam, and between the solid cloud-patches lie dark spaces of land. Onward, and we steam through Edgecumbe Bay, and see beyond us Bowen lifting itself from a soft grey shroud of falling rain, the houses along the shore gleaming cream-tinted behind a quicksilver line of sunlit water; and in a few more moments the town spreads out before us as we drop our anchor and wait for the mail.

Port Denison, the harbour of Bowen, is termed Sleepy Hollow by some, perhaps on account of the restful appearance which it presents. The houses lie along the beach, with hills beyond and around them. A fine wooden pier stretches out, said to be one-third of a mile in length; a hulk or two and some pleasure-boats lie about. The people do not hurry here, and it may be stated as a general rule that north of Brisbane objection is taken to any business being done in a flutter. The daytime is the time for lounging under verandahs and other shady places, and for talking, a slight sprinkling of business topic being introduced into this leisurely-conducted conversation, with a drink or two, and a pipe or cigar—and that is how the arduous toil of the day is got over by the principals. The subordinates follow suit by patiently waiting on their employers' orders, and while so waiting, yarning and smoking, or tanning their bare arms in the sun. Young men and women not too fond of muscular exertion or mental excitement can be safely recommended to emigrate to North Queensland. A nervous, excitable

man would make himself a perfect nuisance to his master and to all around him; he would go mad in a week, get sunstroke, or die of impatience. Yet one qualification all new-comers ought to possess—heads capable of withstanding any quantity of spirituous liquor; otherwise they will not succeed. If a man do not die of sunstroke, there is strong risk that he will of *delirium tremens*. The further one goes north the thirstier the inhabitants seem, and the more fiery the quality of the spirits sold, for what would give convulsions to a native of Victoria will hardly tickle the palate of a North Queens-



lander. They like something that will rasp their throats a bit, and they like this rasping frequently repeated.

There are several towns chosen by their own inhabitants to be the future capital of Northern Queensland, should the policy of separation ever come to pass. Townsville, Cooktown, Mackay, in fact every town that a tourist visits, is in turn pointed out to him by the residents as specially suited to be the future capital. It need hardly be added that all show good and sufficient reasons why each town should be selected. One gentleman, Mr. Monk, of Cairns, who has surveyed all that quarter, as well as the Barron River and Falls, favoured me with many very weighty considerations why, if not the future capital, a great and prosperous town might be built above the Falls on the Barron River.

Cairns, called after the eminent lawyer from the north of Ireland who became Lord

Chancellor, lies some nine hundred miles north of Brisbane, in county Nares, on Trinity Bay. Founded a very few years ago, after a little spurt it fell away and became a very tame place, where no business could be done, so that the inhabitants, originally tempted thither by better prospects, soon sold out and took themselves off. But owing to the discovery of good and extensive sugar-lands, the place has taken a new lease of life, and begun to hold up its head amongst Queensland towns. Its harbour is one of the finest in Queensland; and it is the main centre of the roads to the interior. The climate is healthy, the soil all that could be desired, and inland grows some of the finest cedar in the world. Like all new places where the land is rich, Cairns is not as yet exempt from a tendency to fever. The neighbourhood of the town needs clearing and cultivation, but, when this has been done, the town will be one of the most delightful places where a European could settle. For land that four years ago was sold for £100, £4,000 is now refused.

The Barron River and Falls are about nine miles from Cairns, and it is on the river above the Falls that Mr. Monk proposes to fix the site of his new township. The Queensland Parliament has passed the vote for the first stage of the railway leading to Herberton, where are tin and silver mines. Mr. Monk has a scheme for lifting the train by means of water power to the level of the Falls. These Falls are the largest in Australia; colonials who have seen both say that they beat Niagara, and whether this be so or not, there can be no doubt that they are of imposing magnitude. There is a constant supply of water, clear as crystal, and sufficient to furnish a very large city. Some miles above the Falls is a fine broad sheet of water, and the river will float vessels from this basin right up to the cedar country, and close to Herberton. Mr. Monk's idea is to found the city on the banks of this sheet of the Barron River, take the railway from Cairns up by the side of the Falls by grade, ship the tin, silver, cedar, and other inland produce to the new town, and train it thence to Cairns, making this place the seaport for the inland city.

But we must haste back three degrees south to Bowen—only, however, to leave it, with its calm reposeful air and green hillsides, with Mother Biddick's stone standing out of the hillside that overlooks the town, with the purple inland mountains, with Gloucester looming in the distance, and with its new lighthouse on the rock, guarding it as it were from all bustle and haste. We pass Cape Upstart, and the sun goes down, as it has done nearly every night, behind a bank of soft clouds, leaving rich trails of lustre upon the deep blue waters, as the moon rises, and the twilight deepens from orange to rose and dark blue. Then we pass Cape Bowling Green, with its low-lying lines and gleaming lighthouse, and draw near to Cleveland Bay.

As I stood admiring the large full moon, with its brilliant trail of burnish, and the dark ocean around, a slight shock took place in the engine-room, and then the propeller stopped dead. We had broken our shaft, and must sail into Townsville as best we could. Fortunately the breeze was fair, so that by sailing three knots an hour we managed to reach the Bay about seven in the morning, in time to see a fine sunrise over the Castle Hill.

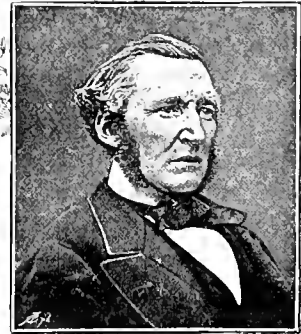
Townsville is an important port, and ought to be, for it is in a splendid situation,

sheltered behind by mountain ranges, and on the sea side by Magnetic Island, upon which the authorities of Townsville have placed the quarantine station. This name was given by Captain Cook, because the needle of his compass went wrong, and he accounted for its aberrations by some magnetic influence about this island. There is a superb bay fronting a thriving and beautifully situated town, with a most fertile country to back it up.

The morning was showery, making delicious play of light and mystery upon the mainland, as well as upon the islands that cluster on all sides as we sail along. Inside this mighty ocean reef-wall there is usually a summer sea, and it is nearly always a pleasure to sail within its shelter. Outside, the sea breaks in white crests, and heaves in troublous motion, but here it sleeps, and well it is that it does, seeing that everywhere shallow beds and sunken reefs show in patches as we glide over them.

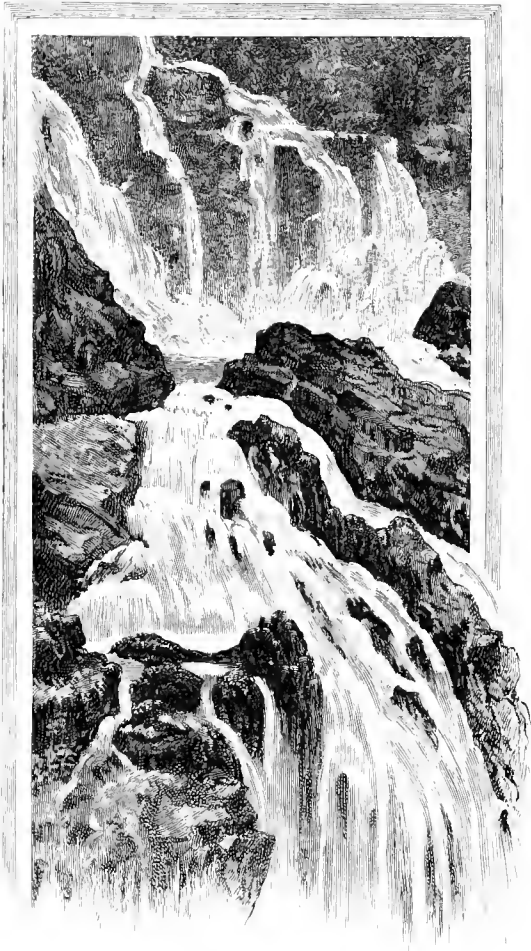
Passing Fitzroy and other islands, we come to the lonely Snapper Island, unpleasantly named the Graveyard of Queensland. Not very long ago, when food was scarce, passengers from Port Douglas came on board the ships in a starving condition, and, having been long unused to food, devoured the ships' rich fare so furiously that numbers died after their first meal, and as bodies cannot be kept long in this latitude, they were immediately buried upon Snapper Island, which, therefore, has been named since those days the Garden of Death, or the Graveyard of Queensland.

It is getting on in the afternoon as we approach Cape Tribulation—so named by Cook, because at the time he was in great trouble—and the lofty peak of Peter Botte, unlike its namesake in the Mauritius, still unexplored. The Cape rises 3,350 feet above the sea, constantly hidden among the clouds, gathering all the rain that is anywhere near, and feeding many rivers. Peter Botte is not often to be seen, but we are especially favoured. We see him towering grandly up like



MAIN STREET, CAIRNS.

THE FIRST LORD CAIRNS.



THE BARRON FALLS.

a gigantic monument above the cloud-ridges, as line below line they reach down the mountain side, whilst this summit, away in the far distance, looks purple and mystic. The sun is going down quickly, and changes in colour take place every moment. The sun's rays are still white when they dip behind those lofty barriers, but as it sinks lower golden shafts are driven up amongst the scarlet and purple masses, and spread over the clear space above. Then, as evening draws in, the clouds seem to rise up and disperse, leaving the vast mass of rugged and clearly-defined ridges standing black against a golden-lustred sky. Here and there a mist-ray, left behind, still hangs, to blur the harsh line of the beetling crags or the giant cedars and firs. The gold grows deeper in the sky and the outlines more sharply defined, while the details are all lost, and the imagination fills in that awful purple blank. Then Night again folds it up in her star-bespangled, blue-green mantle, and the moon once more becomes a light unto our path.

It was early morning when we first sighted the remarkable coast-line of Cape Melville, a rare treat for a geologist to

enjoy, and a conundrum for him to solve. For miles along this coast nothing can be seen but great masses of stone, all flung loosely together, as if in some former remote cycle a furious war of demons had taken place, the materials of victory and defeat being left behind. They lie loosely, one on the top of the other—rounded masses, like those ice deposits on the tops of some of the mountains in Europe, yet in such vast and closely-packed quantities that it is difficult to account for their presence in the same way.

At one point I noticed what with the naked eye I took to be an extensive and superb mansion, close by the shore. Looking through the field-glass, I saw that it was only boulders set up on end, with others lying over and under them, the dividing-lines and sharp shadows making perfect resemblances to windows, pillars, and doors. The colour of these boulders was like that of sandstone, with iron-stains blending richly with the sun-bleached greys, adding to the striking house-like appearance. In size the structure might well have been the stronghold of the gigantic monsters who flung those immense

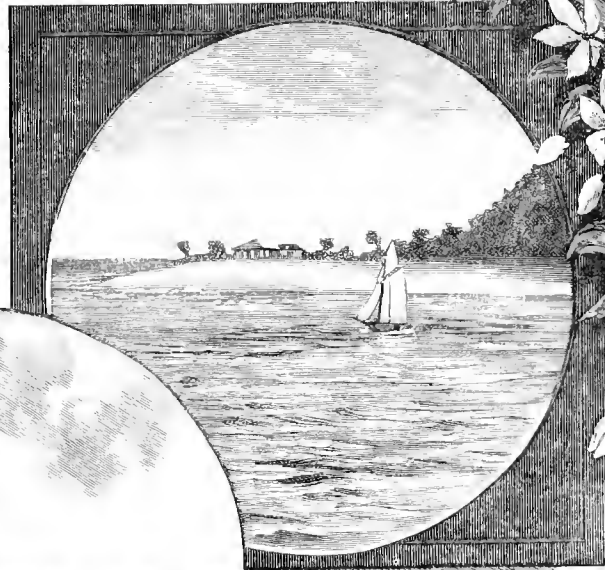
missiles; in design it had a Tudor cast—square-built, with many turrets and gables.

Behind this Nature-built fortress the sea-sands and green-grey grass extended apparently about 300 yards, with here and there clusters of stones, as if a wall had been thrown down, and met by a grassy bank, such as we see in a river-bed broken up by rainfalls and earth-slips. On the top of this bank spread great sand and grass-covered plains, terminating in belts of gun-trees, grass-trees, zamia, and other hardy tropical trees.

On these grass-plains was what appeared to be a huge city of natives' huts. But all over that vast expanse of architecture reigned the silence and stillness of death, rendered doubly impressive by the bright glare of the white morning sun, casting creamy lights and velvet shadows of cold grey upon each wall and dome as it stood tenantless and apart. It was a city of the dead, larger than ancient or modern Babylon, or any other city the world has ever seen. A man might ride full gallop day after day in a straight line along these



BOWEN.



NEAR ROWEN.

silent streets and find no life. Each house would be about ten or twelve feet high, on a separate plot of its own of long, dry, rustling grass. He might ride until the feeling crept over him that it was a city of ghosts, and that these rustling grasses held the sighing of the

still imprisoned souls who in the vanished past had erected these deserted dwellings. At length a kangaroo starting up, or a snake gliding off, would give the nerves a shock, and send him shuddering upon his way.

Who can picture the gruesome feeling of horror which would take possession of the lonely bush-wanderer's heart and brain as he rode under the sable shadows of these mysterious erections? One of those daring explorers told me that he once rode a day and a night straight on without getting clear of them, and for weeks after felt nervous and uncomfortable—starting up at the slightest noise, and unable to shake off the impression of his ghastly ride. On the lonely plains he would have felt nothing, but with those clay-built, sun-baked gables succeeding each other with unceasing monotony, he felt that another day would have driven him mad.

In the distance, when I first beheld this marvellous sight, I thought that, although I saw no workers, this part of the country must be under a very high state of cultivation, and that these objects were vast fields of corn-stacks; then a little reflection, along with the melting pitch from the seams of the deck, awoke me to my mistake; and as we drew nearer my wonder increased to see that they were solid buildings, mud-cemented, and built after a quaint design. I was about to conclude that I saw before me the work of a nation higher in culture than the savage, untameable, and houseless aborigines who now hunt the kangaroo, and, when possible, slaughter the venturesome explorer, when the captain came over to me and said: "Don't forget to sketch those ant-hills. They are one of the wonders of Queensland"!

Cape Melville juts out to sea for a considerable distance; at least, those clusters of stones already spoken of, and appear at odd places in the waters. At one spot a regular wall of about a mile is seen in a bay a little to one side, lying out to sea like a regularly piled up stone pier. At another point, and detached from the land, a small island shows entirely covered with these stones, great and small. They look as if at one period it had rained stones, and as they fell they lie, black like flints, white and mixed like conglomerates, yellow and grey like sandstones, with water stains and iron rust standing out richly against the blue and green and violet contrast of the sun-lighted waves. At Cape Melville itself great masses stand up like turrets amidst the confusion of fallen boulders on all sides. There is no more system here than there is about the placing of the mountain-top boulders attributed at home to the Ice period. But these masses of sandstone and granite can hardly, as I have said, be accounted for in the same way; rather, one would think, must they have been thrown upwards from the bed of the ocean long ages before the coral insects began to work upon the Great Barrier Reef.

Leaving the Cape, with its wild desolation and barren grandeur, we shortly sight Cape Flinders, with Castle Rock, a continuation of the same eccentric formation. Loose stones lie about the sea-shore and on the grassy flats, in some places fixed in the act of rolling down the slopes; but they are more closely gathered together on the beach, which is rugged and surf-beaten, showing patches of sand and broken coral, with shells between the bare, smooth, or clam-covered boulders.

Northward still we go, with peeps of low-lying mainland and sea-banks, broken up by

red sears and gleaming-white sand-hills, towards Albany Pass and the extreme point of Queensland, Cape York—about 1,822 miles from Brisbane, by the route I have come. It is between Flinder's Cape and Albany that we sight a long patch of sand and young trees on the Great Barrier, showing us the formation of an island yet in its infancy. A long band of shining gold it appears to be, bordered on the outer side by a fringe of snowy down, with a deep line beyond of dark amethyst, and on our side a mantle of subtle changing colours, delicious green predominating. A few dark-coloured knobs, like jet beads, decorate the golden line where it joins the green, and some stunted

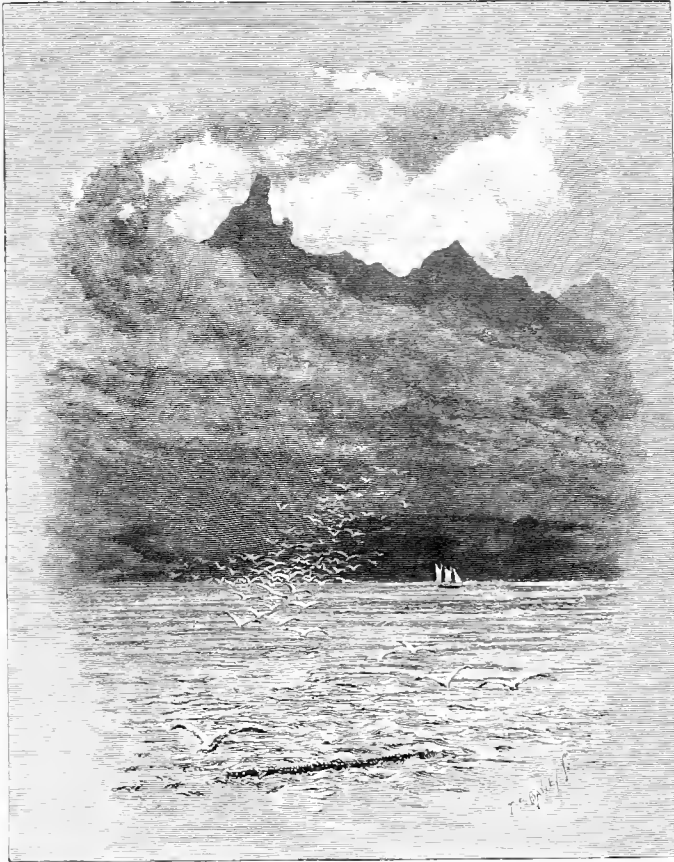


THE BARRON RIVER ABOVE THE FALLS.

shrubs, with taller palm-like trees, wave and bend near the ocean side. On the sands they have planted a beacon board, and by the side of the board a staff and ropes. Some pelicans sit or waddle about. One makes me laugh as I watch him through the field-glass. He has been fishing, and has caught a very large fish. This fish he tries to swallow, but it sticks in his throat. Again and again he brings it up into the vast pocket under his preternaturally long bill, and tries to bolt it with a sudden gulp. It goes a certain distance, and no further, and he swells and chokes, and frantically wags his stupid-looking head, while the other long-beaked adepts in the gentle art of Isaak Walton look on in solemn apathy. We pass out of sight before that choke-or-bolt problem is solved, leaving the fringe of ermine and black spots, jagged rocks with roaring breakers of surf hissing about them, and the solemn pelican conclave. Meanwhile

we send behind us dark clouds of smoke to blend, after hovering a space like inky blots, softly into the tender blue, and make shadow-sides, perhaps, for those tiny clouldlets like puffs of lamb's wool now hanging all motionless above the trembling waters, which only our propeller disturbs as we glide along.

We pass a light-ship, and on the poop a woman waves either her dish-towel or a dirty handkerchief at us. We respond, wondering how this hermit life and awful ocean



MOUNT PETER BOTTE.

monotony suits her, and how she still retains vivacity enough even to signal passing vessels, with that everlasting sound of lapping waters about her contracted prison, and that nearly everlasting sunshine and smooth water. Does she agree all the better with her husband now that she is shut in day after day, and week after week, with him and his mate, with the sky blazing hot and the deck like an oven, with the unvaried round of sardines, sheeps' tongues, and tinned salt meat, and only a rare storm to give a change to her uneventful life? Will washing the decks and dishes be the same as washing the floors and dishes ashore? I think if I were the lighthouse-keeper I should grow tired of the golden sunrises and orange sunsets, of the silver

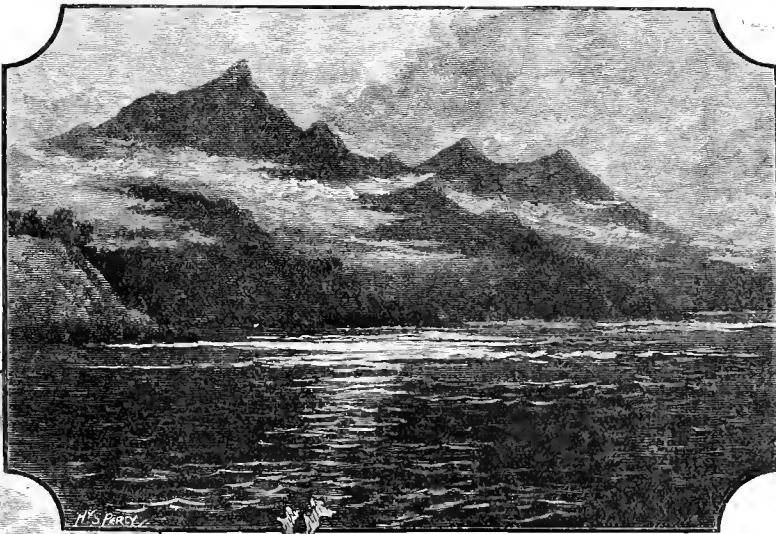
moonlights and clondless, star-lit nights. The sight of those heavy, tropical, electric-charged clouds forking out their random flashes would be a glad relief, the rattle of heaven's musketry sweet music.

This light-ship is painted red and pointed with white, is one-masted, and has a railed-in look-out. The sun may blister its paint-work, or the sudden furious gales make it groan and labour at its chains, but there is no danger, as there is no motion. The deck looks clean, and, with the woman on board, there are articles lying about which give it a little of the appearance of land. Land,

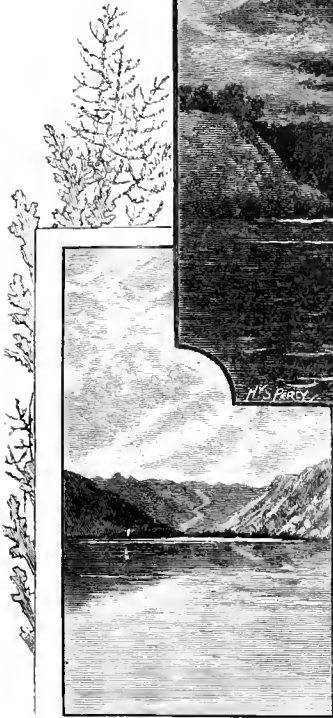


FITZROY ISLAND.

however, is far distant, and land such as they see is held in possession by cruel, senseless savages, who kill and



CAPE TRIBULATION.



NEAR PORT DOUGLAS.

eat their own children. It is not likely they would be more merciful to strangers. Now and again a steamer passes the light-ship, giving to its inmates a hasty glimpse of other humanity, and even so doing something, though it be but little, to relieve the monotony of their existence. Occasionally a vessel will stop to supply them with fresh provisions, but having transferred these to the small boat belonging to the light-ship, it loses no

time in once more getting under weigh. The shepherd of Central Australia has the same fate, and not infrequently goes insane; yet his life seems less lonely.

By day, as the light-ship basks in the sun, it is a welcome sight to passing vessels, a milestone on the way; and at night, with the great stars shining above it, and its nearer golden light blazing out and rippling down the broken waters, it is a cheering and heart-warming spectacle; but to those on board, who night after night only see the

dusky-looking halo round the lamp-disc, who day after day go up to trim it, what must it become? They give light and life and variety to others, burning their own hearts away with the weariness of monotonous, dreary duty.

We steam through Albany Pass, firing a gun as we pass the pretty bay, where lies Somerset, once the Government settlement of Northern Queensland and Torres Straits, but now only a pearl-fishing station, Thursday Island having been chosen as the official seat and residence. A flag is lowered at Mr. Jardine's house in answer to our salute, and we shortly afterwards sight and pass Cape York, and the islands which cluster about it, and anchor at Port Kennedy, Thursday Island.

This beautiful island has not yet got a wharf. The settlers are waiting for the Government to build one, and meanwhile visitors are carried on shore by South Sea Islanders, the ladies tenderly in their arms, the men on their brawny shoulders. The settlement is as yet in its childhood, but nowhere in all the colonies have I seen dress, particularly in the male, carried to such a picturesque extreme. They are mostly all Government officials who live here, agents for shipping companies, or owners of pearl-fishing stations; and it is not considered respectable to appear in any other guise than full-dress uniform, which dress, like the costume of the angels, must be the colour, or rather lack of colour, symbolic of innocence. This costume adds much to the picturesqueness of the island, and the large blending of coloured races gives it a very un-English appearance. Malays, Chinese, Cingalese, and South Sea Islanders, gaily dressed, and flush of money, keep it always thriving-looking and foreign; and the palms, coral-trees, manum apple-trees, bananas, &c., keep up the illusion. Orchids grow here plentifully, and in great variety, and the breeze is almost always strong and ozone-laden. A beautiful port is Kennedy, with its panorama of islands and mainland, all dotted over with thriving pearl fishing stations.

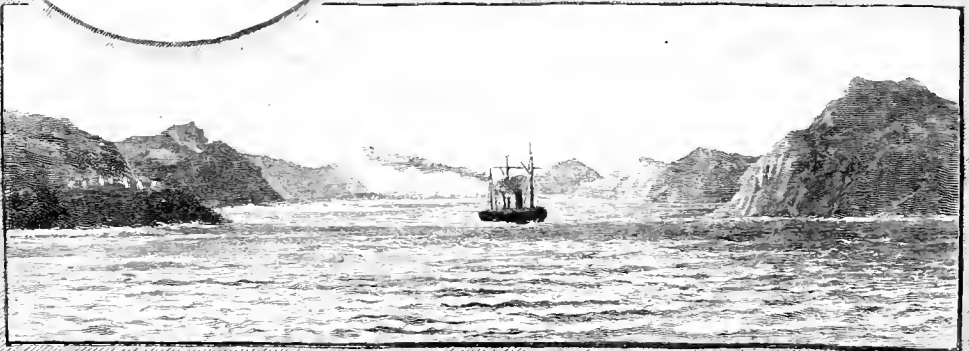
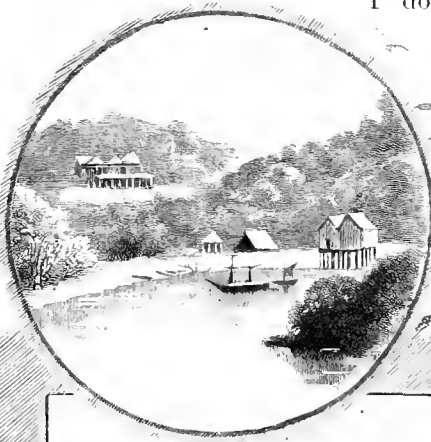
The owners of the stations lead a gay and festive life, and when fresh provisions can be got, want for little in the way of comfort. They are most hospitable to strangers, and will kill the fatted goose any day, if there is one to kill, and if you can only provide them with an excuse to give a feast all round. It is not every day that geese are left to kill, and not every week that a bullock can be had for slaughtering, but when the deed of blood is done, it becomes an imperative duty in this climate to feast until the meat is consumed.

The owners of the pearl-fishing stations get the shells, but it is from the divers that strangers are most likely to get pearls. The master is supposed to have all that comes out of the waters, and he does get an odd pearl now and again, but the diver and his mates are said to keep the first-water pearls to themselves, and a good diver is much too valuable for his master to find fault with or seem suspicious of him. A reckless set of men these divers are, mostly South Sea Islanders. They earn from £40 to £60 per month at their legitimate business, and often make extra by selling the pearls they have managed to smuggle while cleaning the shells. Money is of little value to them when they can earn it so quickly; their hands are nearly always full of bank-notes, and they can drink like fishes, only that their beverage is not like the fishes'.

The masters do pretty well also by this trade when the oysters are plentiful and the weather is calm, as it mostly is round about Thursday Island. The mode of work is very simple. The boats are sent out plentifully supplied with provisions and drink: the men insist on much drink, gin being the favourite tippie. A fortnight is usually the time that the divers are expected to stay away from the station; longer if not successful in their oyster-searching. They sail away, working while the tides are down, when they come to a likely place upon their run, and cleaning the shells when they cannot work below. The diver is screwed into his dress and helmet, weighted with lead till he could not move on land, and then the others lower him gently by ropes into the sea. When he reaches the bottom he communicates with those above by means of his life-line and code of signals, indicating whether he wants more or less air, whether the vessel is to stand still, or drift, or to go on. A good diver can stay below some eight hours at a stretch, and I don't know but that he earns his £60 a month and extras if he does this. He carries his life with him every day he ventures into that depth, and must not have a single enemy on board. The owners are very much afraid to lose any of their divers, and regard a good one with sincere affection, petting him like a favourite child, and seldom denying any request if it be at all in reason. Though coloured men, they are not made to feel that any inferiority attaches to them on that account; indeed,

I do not think that there is one pearl-station owner who would not sooner quarrel with his dearest friend than with his best diver.

As for the divers, notwithstanding that they are great drunkards, spendthrifts, and thieves, they would shame many white heroes by the

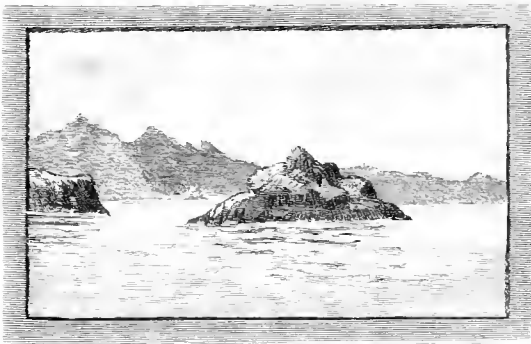


1. SOMERSET.

2. ALBANY PASS.

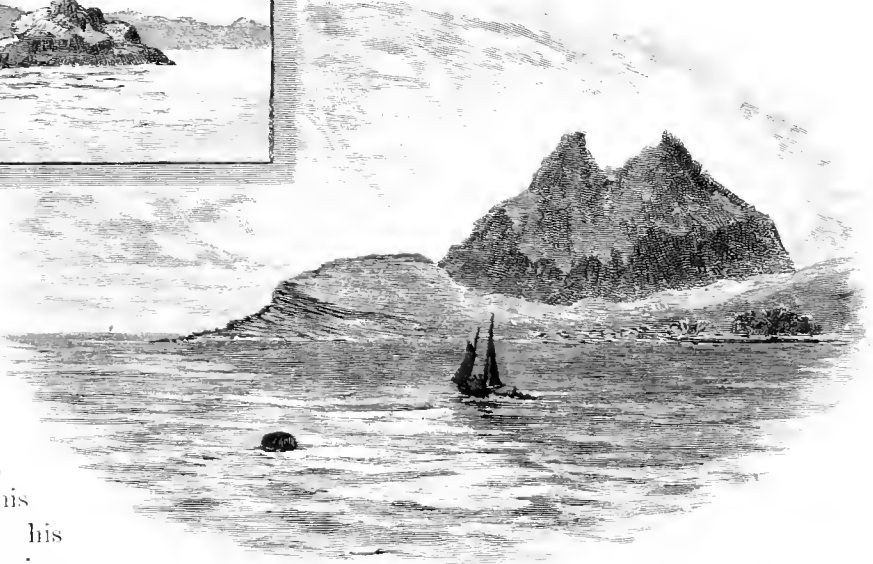
courage they display, and the simple confidence with which they place their lives in the hands of their comrades. Considering the perilous nature of their calling, very few accidents take place amongst them. Sharks are frightened at the strange appearance of the intruder, and it is a most rare occurrence for them to attack him, but if they are numerous, sometimes he becomes timid, and is drawn up out of their way. A little grease or oil carelessly left or dropped on the diving-dress is generally the cause of the sharks coming about. Generally they give him a wide berth, and no cases are known where a shark has bitten at the air-tubes or life-line.

The real danger lies in the line getting twisted round a rock or reef, and the diver becoming confused, and



CAPE YORK.

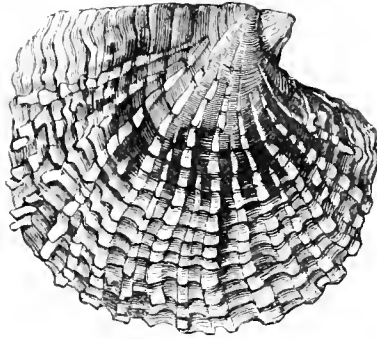
making matters worse. Then there can be no hope for him—he must die. One diver, however, saved his life by cutting his life-line, and stopping the hole with his hand. He was drawn



CAPE FLINDERS AND CASTLE ROCK.

up insensible, bleeding at nose and ears. Another diver who, intent upon the shells, had forgotten to look ahead, and got entangled in a rock, became confused, took the wrong turn, and so fastened himself past redemption. Those above, seeing the uselessness of trying to hoist him up, cut the connecting-line, and sailed away. Next morning they returned to look for the body, and, what was of as great importance to them, to recover the dress. The first diver who went down very soon gave the signal to haul up, and when he appeared was in a state of great excitement, saying the body was still alive. Believing it to be an evil spirit, he refused to go down again. However, after a time he consented, on condition that someone else went with him. The owner donned a dress, and went down with him, to find the body of the poor fellow

seated bolt upright on a rock, with knife in hand raised in the direction of some sharks who were hanging about. Under the water things are magnified greatly, and this, added to the huge and unwieldy dress, made the dead diver appear to be of gigantic proportions, while the uncertain light and the eddies caused the body to sway to and fro.



PEARL OYSTER SHELL.

A DAY'S WORK IN THE NEVER NEVER COUNTRY.

The New Chum—Long Hours—Draughting—A Fierce Mob—Sorting—Desperate Provocation—The Scapegoat—Branding—100° in the Shade—Rest after Labour.



LIGHTING THE FIRE.

QUEENSLAND is not a country which mere idlers enjoy, and visitors who rush through it generally call it monotonous and deficient in interest. Nevertheless, the scenery has a charm of its own, if you will but keep quiet and not judge it hastily, but allow it time first to speak to you. Dull indeed, and void of poetry, must be he who will not feel exalted by the contemplation of the great solitudes of the bush, who will not learn something from its deep silence, whose eye will not enjoy the sublime light of its atmosphere and the delicate tracery of its foliage, the brilliant plumage of its birds and the weird melancholy of its wild scrub. It stands alone in the scenery of the world, its vastness is part of its charm. Do not try to compare it with anything else, for comparison here is not only infelicitous but discouraging, and will lead you to undervalue a

charm which is more easily felt than spoken about.

Queensland is some thirteen thousand miles from England—a big gap to jump, but no bigger than the moral gap which exists between the two countries. If you are a "new chum" you must be content to forego all your old notions, you must submit to be always in the wrong, content to be told at every turn both by word and gesture that you are a fool. It seems hard at first to be scoffed at for every suggestion you make, but when you are an old hand your experience will probably not make you one whit more merciful to others. If you are at the head station, all the disagreeable jobs on the place will fall to your lot: you will probably be receiving less pay than any other man on the place, and yet working harder than you have ever worked before.

It sounds delightful to have horses to ride, to be quit of the weary routine and drudgery of office or bank work; but wait until the close of a long, hot day finds you still in the saddle on a tired horse, wearily following in the dust of a mob of cattle, which must be yarded before you can get your supper and go—not to bed, for perhaps you are at an out-station, where such a luxury as a bed does not exist, but to an unoccupied corner of a not over clean floor, where, rolled up in an old blanket, you snatch what sleep you can. Yet, when at break of dawn you are roused from your rest, the long night hours seem to have disappeared like a conjurer's pack of cards: you grumble at having been called so soon, and many a Sybarite on a bed of down has slept less well than you.

"Come away down to the yard: there are some 400 head of cattle to be draughted before breakfast, and to-night we must kill, for the beef is very low in the cask. There, light a fire there. Have you got the brands, two letters out of the alphabet, and one numeral? Now start away and draught the cattle through the pound. We want twenty head for the butcher; draught them off into that yard. You stand against the gate of the receiving yard, and when you hear the word 'Bullock' open the gate and let the bullock through. The big yard for the bush cattle, and the sand yard for the unbranded calves. That dun cow with crumpled horn will do to kill; draught her off into the killing yard with a couple of quiet things to keep her company. If you leave her alone she will rush about and fret herself into a fury before the evening. Look out, there!"

The sun has not yet risen, but the sky is all aglow with the coming glory, and the distant range of hills behind which it is still hidden glows with a deep purple. There are some 400 head of cattle in the big yard; they are lowing uneasily, and huddling themselves together, first in one corner, then in the other. Now they are driven forward into a smaller yard, and the dust flies up, and, tinged by the rising sun, hangs over the stock-yard like a golden cloud. At every gate through which they are asked to pass, the mob fight shy, and whirling into a compact mass turn round and round, those in the outside circle pressing on those in the centre, and those in the centre struggling against those outside, until so dense a cloud of dust has been raised that nothing but an indistinct mass of heads and horns can be seen through it. Now the cattle dogs are put on. They are a shaggy kind of terrier bred for the purpose, and so carefully selected for the special point of "heeling up" cattle, that they have become a recognised breed.

"Heel them up, Snap!"—"Pist!"—"At them, Stumpy! Let us see you at work. Well done! You dodged that kick with great judgment. Nip the heels of that white steer. Be quiet, do: don't you know that barking is forbidden? Creep noiselessly up to them, and with your ears erect, and one eye fastened on the upper muscles, which experience tells you must quiver before the kick comes, catch them just above the heel with those sharp-pointed teeth of yours. That's right!" That old "worker" belongs to the team of some carrier who has probably lost him. He knows all about a dog's heeling-up, and has a shrewd idea that the stiff crack of a whip may cut him across the ribs if he does not move on, so he gives a good lead forward; and now they are all pressing through the gate as if their very lives depended upon their getting through six abreast. When some thirty are through, the gates are closed.

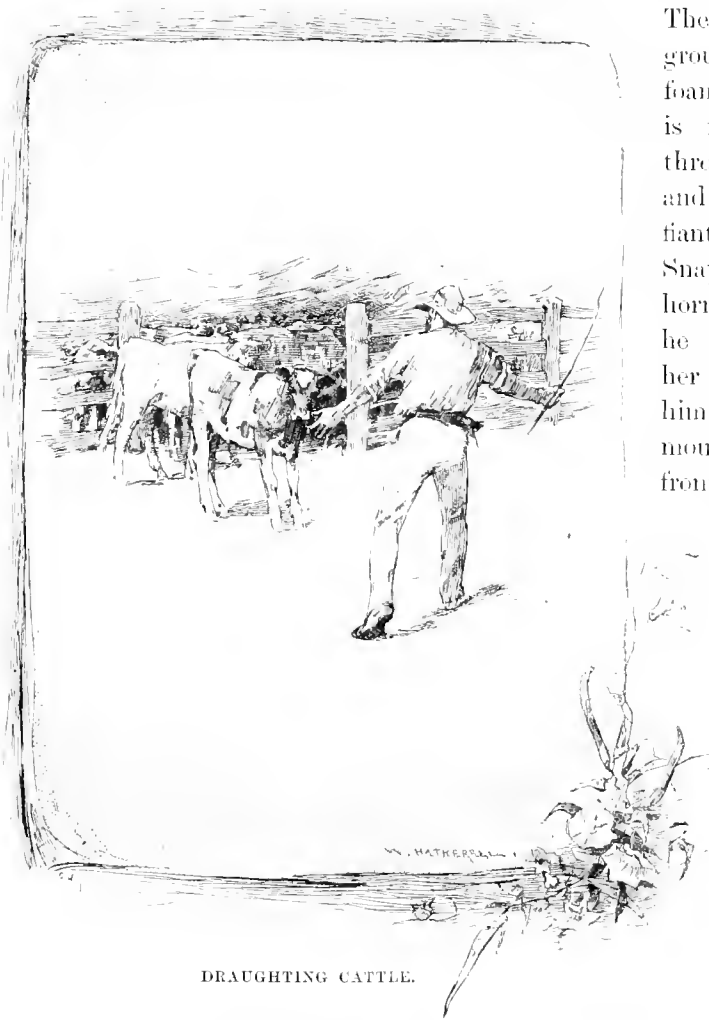
The manager stands at the fourth gate leading into the pound, and with a long pole checks the advance of the cattle, or prods one forward, and as the animal advances into the pound, calls out in a stentorian voice, "Bush," "Calf," or "Bullock." Instantly the gate of the yard called out is thrown open, and with a plunge and a kick the beast rushes forward. Woe to the man who is caught napping! Woe to him who hears indistinctly or gets flurried, and, mistaking the call, opens the yard of the mixed cattle to a bullock, or lets an unbranded calf back to its mother!

As the draughting proceeds the lowing augments, until it sounds in your ears like

the mingled whistle and roar of the wind and sea. Calves calling piteously for their mothers; cows lowing in plaintive accents for their calves; bullocks angrily bellowing for their mates. Now high above the din rises a loud shout of "Look out!"—"Mind yourselves!" With head lowered and tail curled into the air, and a deep bellow of rage, a wild cow is let into the pound. In one instant the man in the pound has

climbed to the top rail of the yard. The infuriated animal tears the ground with her horns, and the foam flies from her mouth. A gate is flung open for her to pass through, but she only looks at it, and tosses her head more defiantly than ever. "Heel her up, Snap!" The dog, dodging her horns, keeps well behind her until he can make a plucky dash at her heels, but she is too quick for him, and has caught him in the mouth and sent several of his front teeth down his throat. Plucky

as he is, he moves away very sorry for himself, and with a flying kick the cow suddenly tears through the gate and joins her mates. That parting kick was well directed: it made the rails shiver again, and just missed annihilating a black boy. The men all look at each other and laugh; the black boy laughs too, but it is rather a sickly grin; he does not quite see where the excellence of the joke



DRAUGHTING CATTLE.

comes in. Someone says something about the old cow being an ugly customer, but you only see lips move, for voices are all but inaudible in the terrible din.

At length the last beast is draughted. The sun is well up now, and all prepare to move towards the "humpy" (a miserable hut) for breakfast. Someone asks how many calves there are to brand. The eyes of all wander towards the yard in which the calves are penned, and the next instant every jaw drops and deep consternation is depicted on each face. From ten to twelve silly calves alone occupy the yard

where some eighty head ought to be congregated. For one dread instant there is a silence of horror, but the veins have begun to swell on the temples of the manager, and the storm bursts with a round oath. Surely the recording angel will balance against that oath the desperate provocation which called it into being. A careless miscreant has left the lower gate of the yard open, and the unbranded calves have



SEIZING A CALF FOR BRANDING.

quietly rejoined their mothers. The precious hours of early daylight have been lost, and the draughting must all be gone over again.

Now there arises a perfect storm of recriminations and accusations. Why had no one noticed it before? It was everyone's fault and no one's fault. The quick tempers fire up and sputter out angry sparks; the sullen men look as sulky as bears. Just as the acme of rage is reached, the new chum is seen sauntering through the open gate. A gleam of devilish delight shoots into every face. "They might have known it"—"Come here, you——" and many other phrases best left unrecorded. It is in vain

that the youth declares that he did not open the gate, but found it open, and only thought that he was doing good by chasing the calves through it: in vain that he points with pride to two faintly smouldering logs, and says that since dawn he has been engaged in making the branding-fire burn. His incapacity and his total inappreciation of the enormity of the offence with which he is charged make the scathing remarks hurled at him more bitter than if he left himself undefended, and it is only when the scapegoat is reduced to abject sullenness that the fury of words is over, and all go in to breakfast.

But now the draughting has all been done again, tempers are quite restored, and branding has begun. A strong red "mick" is being roped. The noose has been thrown over his head, and in spite of his violent struggles he has been drawn up to the fence and tied securely to it by his hind and fore feet. Now the head rope is let go the calf drops on its side on the ground; one of the men stands on its head to keep it down. In spite of bellowing, kicking, and plunging, it is stretched out at the mercy of its captors. The new chum is rubbing his shin bone, wearing the while a face which would have drawn down endless merriment if everyone had not been too busy to mark his antics.

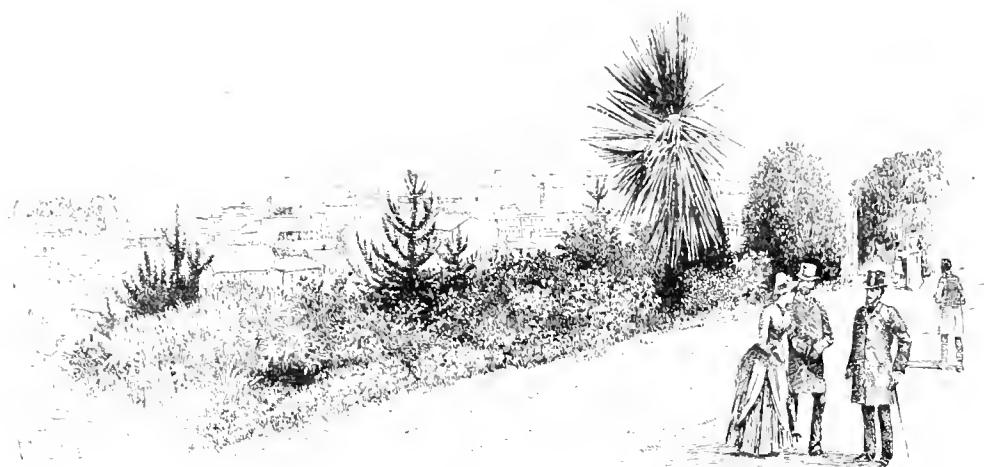
The "mick" is done and is turned out of the branding yard. Two men have already collared another calf, and are dragging it along: it is a small one, and will be scruffed and not roped. One man has it by the ear, and pressing his thumb into its mouth, holds it firmly by the jaw, the other man is almost lifting it along by the flank, and together they march it up to the fence, on the other side of which are the fire and the branding-irons. Now give a quick screw to its head and it will fall on its flank on the ground. As quick as thought the man at its head kneels on its neck and holds its foreleg: the calf struggles and kicks out violently. For an instant there is a doubt as to whether it will get away, but in another moment the man at its tail has propped himself up against one hind leg, and is holding the other outstretched and harmless. "Now hand in the brands through the fence." "Rest them for one instant on the right flank of the calf." "Now the ear." "Snip, snap." "That is right, let her go." In his haste to be useful, the new chum has taken hold of the wrong end of one of the branding-irons, and is now dancing about in agony and whistling through his seared fingers, to the great delight of the onlookers.

Eighty calves have been branded in less than two hours. Not bad work with the thermometer over 100° in the shade, and the hot sun beating down on your back, and the eddying breeze blowing the heat of the fire straight on to you, while swarms and swarms of flies, who have risen with the rising sun and will only go to bed with the fading twilight, have seized upon you and devour you, and when both your hands were occupied have worried you into a fever. There is no pause during the heat of the day, for the Queensland climate, though hot, is not, in consequence of its extreme dryness, enervating, and men can work all through the year and during almost every hour of it. "Now catch your horses, and we will take the cattle out again, and then we must hurry back for the killing. You, Jack, see and take the knives down and give them a turn at the grindstone."

The sun is setting. The sharp report of the rifle is heard, and the dun cow with the crumpled horn has measured her length in the dust. "Strip off her hide and take care not to cut it, for it is worth ten shillings. Sling her upon the gallows. We must be up before the flies to-morrow morning to cut her up. We can't keep much fresh meat such weather as this, so, Mr. New Chum, there will be plenty of salting to keep you in exercise."

The sound of the rifle-shot has brought the niggers up from their camp, and they are disputing with the pack of kangaroo dogs for the morsels the white men are too dainty to use. The liver, the brains, and the sweetbread have gone up to be fried for supper. The black crows and big brown hawks are circling round and round the gallows, and the sun has quite gone down, but the sky glows and glows with purple, red, and yellow: the moon is rising over yonder dark blue line of scrub, and to-night the dingoes will howl in its placid light, and their mouths will water at the feast slung just above their reach. Now let us go home, for rest after toil is sweet.





OAMARU.

DUNEDIN TO CHRISTCHURCH.

Port Chalmers—Purakanni Bay—Blueskin—A Nervous Ride—Oamaru—A Duck-Pond in the Pacific—The Waitaki River—Waimate—Timaru—The Canterbury Plains.

THE journey from Dunedin to Christchurch may be made by sea, at least as far as Port Lyttelton, taking from fifteen to twenty hours by the Union Company's steamer. But by far the more interesting route is by land, the fastest and best appointed train in New Zealand covering the 225 miles every day in rather under twelve hours. The first, or southern, third of the journey, as far as Oamaru, is well worth making, especially the first twenty miles, between Dunedin and Blueskin, which form as interesting and as picturesque a piece of railway travelling as can well be met with.

Leaving Dunedin at eight in the morning, you glide for the first twenty minutes along the shores of the Upper Harbour to Port Chalmers, which is the port of the city. The handsome church in the foreground is Presbyterian, as should be the case in a town called after Dr. Chalmers. It will be noticed that the quays, piers, and wharves are busy with shipping: large ocean-going steamers visit the port, but the majority are intercolonial and coastal. Owing to the geographical character of New Zealand, much more use is made of water than of land-carriage, and the former is, as is well known all the world over, the cheaper. The line gradually ascends the slopes of the hill overlooking the town of Port Chalmers, passing through beautiful bush gullies, and from time to time giving lovely peeps over the Lower or outer Harbour. Every element of beauty is here. There is great diversity of scene—hills close at hand, and hills in the distance, with no monotony in colouring: a charmingly varied shore-line, a large expanse of clear water, in which is frequently reflected a sky of Italian blue. In the substantially built town at our feet, and in the pleasant villas and gardens that we pass, we see the handiwork of man, but much that is visible is still untutored nature. As the train rushes on, the panorama every moment changes. The train dives into a long tunnel, and comes out high up at the head of a bush-covered valley, at the foot of which is the Purakanni Bay, the prettiest of all the pretty bays on the eastern

coast. The line then follows the side of the valley at a high level, and gradually descends until it takes a sharp turn, and you suddenly find yourself on the edge of the cliff, looking sheer down 150 feet upon the huge swell of the Pacific Ocean. After keeping along the edge of the cliff for some distance, the train turns its back upon the sea, and runs down a steep place into Blueskin Bay, of which one gets a beautiful view.

At Blueskin, *alias* Waitati (manifestly an early settler's wrestling with a Maori name), you stop at a little station, close to some beautiful old pine-trees, the remains of the



PORT CHALMERS.

dense forest that until lately covered the whole of the flat. The line next skirts the shore of the smooth bay, which is enclosed by a bar almost on the level of the water, and then quickly ascends the north side, passing Seacliff, the palatial lunatic asylum, provided with rare forethought for the future as well as the present needs of the colony. The railway then remains at the high level, winding in and out through the bush, and for a moment coming to the edge of the white sandstone cliff, of quite a different character from the volcanic Purakanui cliffs. Here you look down sheer some 300 or 400 feet. Immediately afterwards the train passes through a tunnel under a sharp point. The view from over this tunnel is one of the most magnificent panoramas on the coast, stretching south across Blueskin Bay, Purakanui

Bay, and Taiaoroa Heads (the entrance to the Otago Harbour), to the distant inland ranges. The great sweep of Waikouaiti Bay and its river lies at your feet, and beyond that, northward, are the Horse ranges, in which the town of Palmerston is situated, and in the distance, running into the sea, the soft outline of the Moeraki Downs, behind which lies Oamaru.

From the Pukeleraki tunnel, the railway runs inland through the bush for a few miles, and then crosses the back of the Waikouaiti Bay, where the best of the scenery comes to an end. The bare description here given wholly fails to convey any idea of the sensational nature of the journey, the abrupt changes of scene, the constant twists and turns of the line, and the appearance of danger about many parts of it which adds to the charm. As you rush along the edge of the cliffs, you can hardly avoid the thought that a few feet of landslip would hurl you into the ocean, or—what if the train went off the rails! Nervous people often dare not look out of window during this part of the journey, whilst the sharp turns which the line takes make the train rock like a ship in a heavy swell, often to the great discomfort of lady passengers.

The rest of the journey to Oamaru passes mainly through interesting country well worth seeing, but not of the same sensational type as the first part. Half-an-hour's run past Waikouaiti the train reaches Palmerston, a township which was of some importance in the digging days, but is now only the focus of a small agricultural district. (In Australasia, by the way, the name often gives us approximately the date of settlement.) Immediately after leaving Palmerston the line crosses the Shag Valley, and then keeps along the coast-line on the steep slope of the Horse ranges, in the valley of which may be found some splendid rock scenery. Curiously enough, a terrible accident took place on the last journey of the coach which ran between Palmerston and Oamaru, the day before the opening of the railway. The train avoids all such dangers, however, for the rest of its journey. Indeed, from every practical and professional point of view, it ought never to have performed the acrobatic feats between Port Chalmers and Waikouaiti which have been referred to. The engineering difficulties were enormous, the line is very costly, and the country round is but little productive. The line should have been carried straight from Dunedin by tunnel through the hills at the back, and thence northward through the rich inland country, with branches on either side. But the Minister of Public Works at the time when the railway was made was member for Port Chalmers, and if the line had gone by the inland route, it could not have passed through his constituency. This is the way in which we have run up the largest debt in proportion to population that the world can boast! Now it is necessary to make another line to tap the interior of Otago.

The name Oamaru, by the way, is a trisyllable: the second letter is not pronounced, but has the effect of increasing the stress upon the initial, which is sounded short, as in "omnibus." For its size, the place enjoys the distinction of being the best built town in Australasia. Perhaps that is why it is also the most heavily indebted. But of that drawback the least said the soonest mended. Let us rather admire the wide streets with excellent pavements, and the handsome white stone buildings, so agreeably different from the usual type of brick or weatherboard in a

colonial town of this size. The houses glisten white like an Italian city; and there are those who have christened Oamaru the "White City."

Close to Oamaru there is an unlimited supply of beautiful white limestone similar to that of which Valença is built, easily extracted, and, as is testified by its frequent use in public buildings, easily carved. It is a stone well known to architects in such a city as Melbourne. What more natural, then, that with such magnificent material at hand, the ambition of Oamaru should run to architecture? Perhaps nowhere has the vulgar proverb that "fools build houses for wise men to live in" been exemplified on a more complete scale. It can easily be understood that a city of palaces could not well do without an elaborate water supply, and a harbour to match both. There is nothing petty or mean about Oamaru; all the municipal arrangements are on scale with the splendid buildings. We must not expect so much shipping as at Port Chalmers, but the wharves, it will be seen, are by no means idle.

The chief feature of the place is the Breakwater, which, as Sir John Coode puts it, creates "a duck-pond in the Pacific." Reckoned the most substantial, not only in New Zealand, but in Australasia, it is 1,850 feet long, and encloses a basin of some sixty acres: and, curiously enough, in a place that is so rich in stone, it is built of Portland cement, in concrete blocks of thirty-six feet in width and thirty-two feet in height, weighing from twenty to twenty-five tons each. These are capped with masses of solid concrete, each section weighing from 150 to 200 tons. Vessels that draw twenty-four feet of water can take advantage of the harbour's shelter. The work must be regarded as a triumph of engineering; and the enterprise that has brought it about is very creditable to a town which even now does not reckon seven thousand inhabitants.

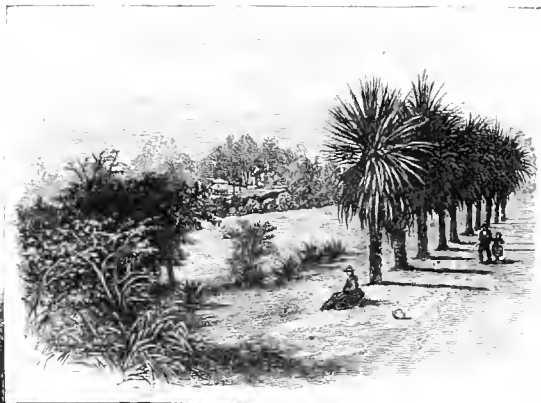
Another interesting structure is the grain elevator, which dresses and grades the grain for the European market. These elevators are common enough in America, but this has the reputation of being the only one in these colonies. The building is of six storeys, altogether seventy-five feet in height, and is well worth going over.

The country round Oamaru is one of the richest agricultural districts of the colony, but unfortunately most of it is in the hands of large proprietors, who are often content to run sheep upon it. Yet in spite of this, the export of cereals has been very large. The stock of the district is considered the best in New Zealand, and it is in this neighbourhood that station life is brought to perfection—good land, ample rain, fine country houses, easy access to town, and the best of climates. It is curious that the Oamaruvians, in most matters so enterprising, have not laid themselves out to make their town a fashionable watering-place. It is impossible, even in the few minutes one stops at the station, not to notice the fresh and bracing character of the air, which the traveller readily supposes must have an exceptional amount of ozone in it. Perhaps a prosperous future as a Southern Scarborough may yet lie before the place. There is a lovely sandy beach, and a pretty country around for drives, whilst the place itself is one of the brightest, cleanest, and most attractive looking towns in the

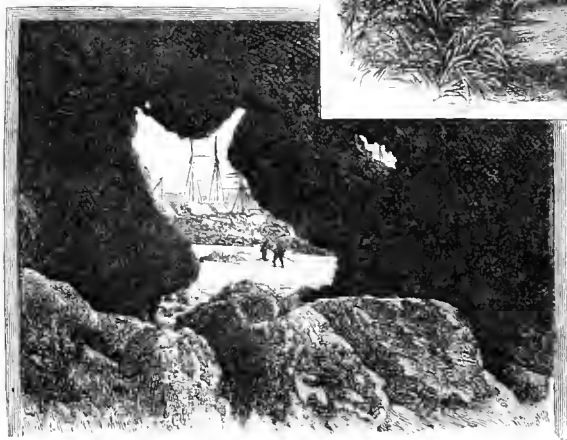
whole colony. There are churches of all the leading denominations, an excellent high school, and a theatre.

The accompanying view of the Oamaru public gardens will, it is hoped, leave on the mind of the reader who looks upon the picture an impression of Oamaru that will help him to understand the delight with which strangers invariably visit this "white-walled city by the sea."

The journey from Oamaru to Timaru takes about two-and-a-half hours, mostly in view of the sea. Soon after leaving Oamaru, the train crosses the Waitaki river, which forms the boundary-line between the Canterbury and Otago provinces. This is of the usual type of snow-fed rivers: a glacial torrent running down from Mount Cook along a shingle bed of enormous breadth, in thin streaks the greater part



THE GARDENS, OAMARU.

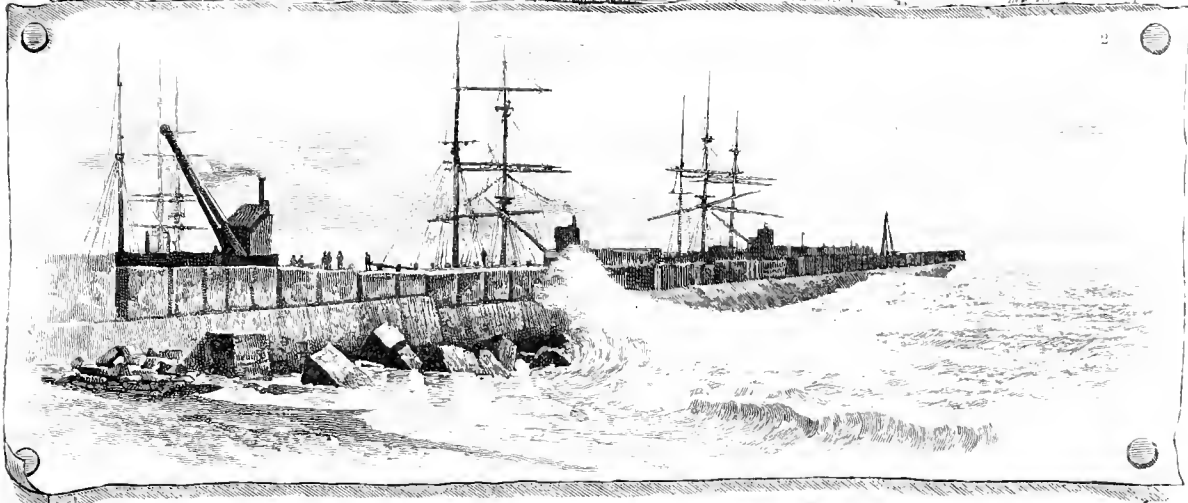


CAVE AT OAMARU.

of the year, whilst at certain seasons there is an overflow into the wider bed. The peculiarity of these rivers is that they change their beds from season to season. At Studholme Junction, whence there is a branch line to Waimate, a township in the

centre of a splendid agricultural district, the northern and southern express meet and pass. There are picturesque views to be seen on the Waiho, a smaller river lying a little to the north of the Waitaki. The town of Waimate lies close to it on a little creek which is its tributary.

From the time you have crossed the Waitaki, it is curious to notice the change in the "genus" of the passengers by the train. Hitherto the prevailing type of features has been distinctly Scotch, with accent to match; but north of the Waitaki the Scotchmen begin to feel out of their element, and have almost entirely deserted the train before it reaches Timaru, being replaced by Englishmen, many of whom are evidently men of good education and breeding. The large agricultural district round Timaru seems to have special attractions for the young English gentleman with four or five thousand pounds for his patrimony, and a love of country life. He is generally "horsey," and



30 1. MOUNT PEEL.

2. BREAKWATER, TIMARU.

3. WAIMATE STATION.

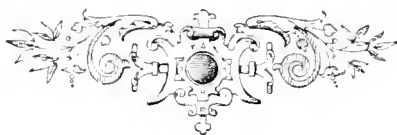
invariably genial. It is permissible to doubt whether he makes as much out of his land as the Scotchman across the Waitaki, who has probably started with less capital, but with more shrewdness and thrift. Usually the Englishman has paid too much for his farm, and perhaps he works it expensively, but he does a great deal of hard work himself, and gets more enjoyment out of life than most men.

Waimate station is not exactly a farm which £5,000 could buy, but who that looks at it can doubt that life thereon is comfortable and happy? How English is its aspect! It is like a charming country seat in the old country. What will not creepers do in the way of hiding novelty! There is nothing about it to suggest newness. The roughness of the old style of station is as completely absent from the house and grounds as the ostentation of the new. This is the sort of home around which affections twine.

Timaru, lying half-way between Dunedin and Christchurch, is probably in a sounder financial condition than Oamaru, but it is not so attractive or imposing. The buildings are fairly substantial, but the dark-blue stone of the neighbouring quarries, like much of the stone used in Melbourne buildings, produces a very gloomy effect. "You may call it blue: it is really black," growled an amateur architect once. Moreover, the stone is too hard to lend itself to much adornment. To travellers going southwards from Christchurch, Timaru seems a thriving country town of a higher type than is to be easily met with in Australia, and leaves a decidedly pleasing impression; but Oamaru puts it so much into the shade that one is inclined to rate it lower than it deserves when travelling northwards. The population of Timaru is about the same as that of Oamaru, but it must be remembered that since 1881 the former has increased much more rapidly than the latter. Here, too, there is a breakwater creating out of the open ocean a harbour which the insurance offices still persistently refuse to trust. The waves of the Pacific know how to dash themselves against it. In earlier days the coast by Timaru had a bad reputation for accidents and shipwrecks, but of late such casualties have been more rare. In Timaru, no doubt, there is less to be seen than in Oamaru. The streets are not so magnificent, and the general appearance of the town is much more commonplace; but the traveller must be particular who finds it hard to be pleased with Timaru, and it lies in a very pleasant neighbourhood. To the tourist Timaru has a special attraction: a railway line passes hence to the Mackenzie Country, and it is by this line that the tourist who is not pressed for time will travel to Mount Cook.

Hence northward to Christchurch, a hundred miles, the line goes across the Canterbury Plains. The grounds at Mount Peel, the seat of the Hon. J. Acland, of the well-known Devonshire family, are very attractive, and yet they are hardly an average specimen of the surrounding country. The Canterbury Plains, though admirable from a practical point of view, and well calculated to give the stranger a good idea of the natural resources of the colony, cannot by any stretch of imagination be called picturesque. "Beautiful country, beautiful country," said a gentleman, driving over part of the western district of Victoria. So often was the remark repeated that a lady in the buggy, wearied with the constant praise, interposed the remark, "What, then, is your idea of

beauty? I see no element of it here." "Three sheep to the acre, three sheep to the acre," he enthusiastically replied. A traveller of this class will admire the Canterbury Plains, but to the visitor with an eye for the picturesque and beautiful—that eye perhaps having feasted in the morning on the glories of Otago Harbour—it is one dead, dreary level the whole way, relieved with trees only at long intervals, and occasionally broken by snow-fed rivers of the Waitaki type, which, with their deserted, untidy look, are more hideous than the plains. The line passes through two good townships, Temuka and Winchester—strange collocation of names, one Maori, the other that of the old-time capital of England. Soon we come to Ashburton, a town which is the centre of a considerable district of growing importance. On the northern side of Ashburton the line crosses the Rakaia River, after which the country becomes shingly, and the soil light and thin for several miles. The only relief to the vast plain are the high ranges of the Southern Alps in the left distance, which on a fine winter's morning stand out admirably with their snowy peaks. These can be seen distinctly in clear weather from certain parts of Christchurch, and form a feature of its scenery which strangers rarely discover for themselves, and even many residents do not know of. As you approach Christchurch, the brown Lyttelton Hills become visible beyond the town to the right. The country around gets richer, and is studded with plantations and homesteads. This part of the colony was as utterly barren as the neighbourhood of Christchurch before settlement began; now no district is so well planted.



THE MURRAY AND ITS TRIBUTARIES.

Captain Sturt's Discovery—The Rise of the Murray—Tributaries—Albury—The Ovens—Yarrawonga—The Timber Trade—The Goulburn—Echuca—The Campaspe—The Loddon—The Murrumbidgee—Wagga Wagga, Narandera, and Hay—The Darling—Bourke—Wentworth—A Mammoth River—Mannum—The Mouth—Goolwa—A Night Camp—What Might Have Been.



A "BILLABONG."

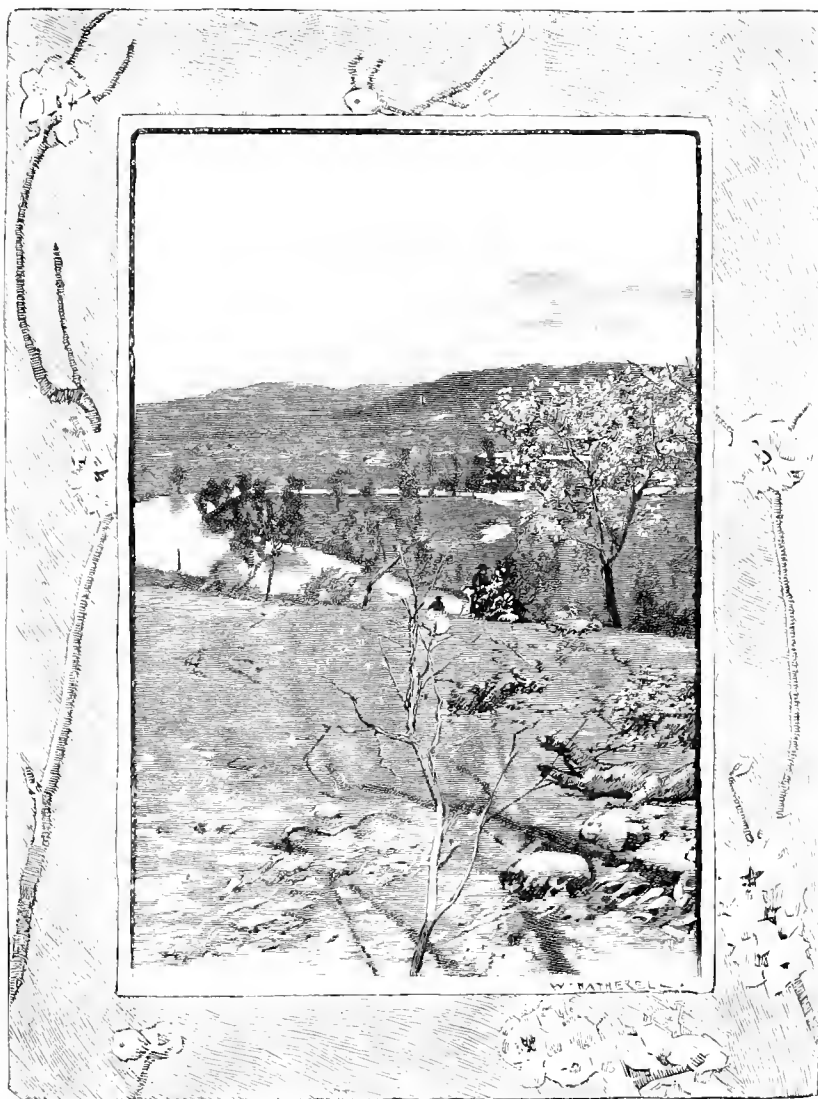
IN the year 1829 Captain Sturt, one of the most daring and successful of Australian pioneers, was despatched by the Government of New South Wales to follow up his important discovery of the previous year, when he had found in the heart of the continent a great river to which he had given the name of Darling, after the then Governor of the colony. Diverging from his former route, instead of descending the Macquarie, or Darling, River he struck the Murrumbidgee about 400 miles above its junction with the Murray, and following it down, reaped the reward of his labours in the discovery of the king of Australian waters. The story is thus related in Mr. Foster's work on "South Australia":—

"This river (the Murrumbidgee) Captain Sturt and his companions followed down for nearly 400 miles, where, from its increasing narrowness, they were afraid they were going to lose it, and with it anticipated the loss of all their toil. But just as their hopes had been depressed to the lowest point, and they were about to give way to despair, they found themselves suddenly projected by the contracting current into a magnificent stream 350 feet wide, and from 15 to 20 feet deep."

In this way was discovered that noble river which, while running its course of over 2,000 miles, drains with its tributaries a large part of the interior of the Australian continent, an area, according to some authorities, of over 300,000 square miles, comprising a tract of country extending from the sources of the Warrego in Queensland, only two degrees south of the Tropic of Capricorn, as far down as the Black Spur in Victoria, and the head-waters of the River Loddon.

The continent of Australia, flat towards the west, rises gradually towards its south-east corner, where, close to the border line between Victoria and New South Wales, culminates the great mountain chain which, under various names, extends from Cape Howe on the south to the furthest limit of York Peninsula on the north. At the point of culmination the dividing range becomes a succession of high peaks, covered almost to their summits with enormous timber, and here, in the midst of a dense and impenetrable jungle, Mount Kosciuszko, the highest mountain in Australia, towers to a height of 7,196 feet. The nature of this region is thus described by an Australian writer, Mr. Sutherland:—"The famous traveller who was the first to stand

on the top of that great cone had a triumph which surely repaid him for the weeks of toil spent in reaching it. He struggled up through wild rock, and lofty forest that hid everything from sight, till he came to the naked rock, where the cold prevents the trees from growing; then up to the bald summit, where snow rests for all but a



NEAR ALBURY.

month or two each year, a mile and a half above sea-level. A little further, and he stood on the edge of a precipice that descended half-a-mile, and, looking over the fearful height, he saw that great valley below like a vast sea of waving trees, where the River Murray gathers its hundreds of little rivulets together to carry their waters a thousand miles away to Encounter Bay."

From its home in these regions of crag and forest, where even yet human foot has hardly been able to penetrate, the stream rushes to the northwards, through scenes of the most unspeakable beauty, a mere mountain torrent—not yet the Murray, but called here the Indi, and sometimes the Hume—swelled every few miles by the streams that, descending from the surrounding heights, pour into it their ice-cold waters. About Tintaldra it changes the direction of its course, and with a bold sweep turns towards the west. A little above Albury, some hundred miles from this turn at Tintaldra, it meets with its first great affluent, the Mitta Mitta, which, rising in the Australian Alps, not far from the Gippsland township of Omeo, and joined by the streamlets from Mount Wills and Mount Cope, leaves behind it the townships of Bethanga and Mitta Mitta, where dwell the hardy miners of Benambra, and hastens to be the first to offer to the royal river the tribute of its waters.

Before reaching Albury, but after its junction with the Mitta Mitta, the Murray is joined by the Little River, or Kiewa Creek, upon which is the small township of Kiewa. Soon it glides forth upon the huge plain over which it must wind its slow course many a weary mile before it nears the end of its journey far away in South Australia. Already it is a noble stream, with water pure and sweet, although seen at a little distance it appears slightly discoloured: whilst studded along its banks are those splendid vineyards for which the district is famed. It was here that the river was first crossed by the explorer Hamilton Hume and his party on their expedition from Sydney to the shores of Port Phillip Bay, a journey never previously accomplished, and it was now called the Hume, in compliment to the father of the leader, a name which the upper river has ever since retained. Below Albury, however—as, indeed, often above—the stream has long been known as the Murray, having been so named, as some say, after a certain Sir John Murray, then an official in the Colonial Office, though others affirm that the name is a corruption of the word “Mullewa,” or “Murrewa,” the native name for the river at this part.

Between Albury (in New South Wales) and Wodonga (in Victoria) there are two bridges, one being the bridge of the line between Melbourne and Sydney. The place where the Murray was first crossed is thus close by its most important crossing-place at the present day.

The river next approaches the townships of Corowa and Wahgunyah, rivals, though linked together, the former being on the New South Wales bank of the river, the latter on the Victorian side. Corowa is only half-a-mile from Wahgunyah, and is in reality Wahgunyah North, the Corowa marked on the Government maps being two miles lower down, and existing only on paper. The townships are connected by a bridge built more than twenty years ago by private enterprise, but a new one is now being constructed by the Governments of the two colonies. Corowa, which is on the lower bank of the river, is by far the more flourishing of the two, with busy public offices, thriving institutions, and a rapidly increasing population. Wahgunyah, though a fairly prosperous town, is said to have fallen back of late, and the population has decreased. It is connected by rail with Melbourne, a means of transport of which its neighbours on the opposite shore are not slow to avail themselves. Indeed, owing

partly to the greater proximity of Melbourne and partly to the energy of the southern colony in pushing its railways to the borders, the greater part of the trade of the Riverina proper is carried to Port Phillip instead of going to Sydney, its own capital, though this tendency has been checked of late years by a Victorian stock tax, which has diverted many thousand head of sheep and cattle from its borders.

At Bundalong, a little below this point, the Murray is joined by its second important tributary, the Ovens. The somewhat peculiar name was not given to it, as the acute reader might imagine, on account of the great heat of the district through which it flows, which, indeed, is not nearly so excessive as in many other parts even of Victoria: it was so named by its discoverer, Hume, after a certain Major Ovens, himself an explorer, and at that time aide-de-camp to the Governor of New South Wales. This river, which runs a course parallel to that of the Mitta Mitta, rises like it in the Australian Alps at no great distance from its sister stream, and keeps a north-westerly course until it is joined at Wangaratta by the King River. Wangaratta is a Victorian township of some importance, boasting of two fine bridges, one of which spans the Ovens with a single arch, while the other, over the King, connects the town with an outlying hamlet known as Oxley Flat. The town, with a population of about 1,500 inhabitants, has a couple of breweries, churches of different denominations, and other indications of civilisation.

At the junction of the King and the Ovens, it is remarkable to see how long the clear bright current of the former refuses to mingle with the muddy waters of the latter, until at last the purer stream becomes contaminated by the evil association, and the waters of the two can no longer be distinguished. The moralist might well apply to his own purpose a phenomenon which the secular writer merely notes. The same thing occurs at the meeting of the Rhône and the Arve a little below Geneva.

From Bundalong the Murray slowly pursues its winding course through the flat, plain country until Yarrawonga and Mulwala are reached. The river here is a rather narrow stream, flowing between low banks fringed by a few gum-trees. It is still crossed by an ancient punt, though for many years past a bridge has been promised, and the inhabitants complain bitterly that the good intentions of the Government are nothing more than good intentions.

Yarrawonga is a town that has grown rapidly of late years, and is still increasing, both in population and in general prosperity. In its case the precedent of Corowa and Wahgunyah has been reversed, since here it is the Victorian township that is ahead of Mulwala, its New South Wales rival. The land on both sides of the river, a mile or two back, is said to be very good for both pastoral and agricultural purposes, and large quantities of grain are grown throughout the district, as much as nine bags to the acre being occasionally obtained: but it is to be regretted that the farmers, by neglecting to manure, and by growing cereals year by year without regard to rotation of crops, are rapidly exhausting the soil. The country for some distance back is flat and uninteresting, and this is more especially the case on the New South Wales sides.

From Yarrawonga to Echuca by the river is 180 miles, but by land it is only

about half that distance, and, roughly speaking, this proportion would hold good throughout the whole course of the Murray, its windings about doubling the distance in a direct line between two given places upon its banks. This proportion of distances, as compared with other rivers, is by no means large. The sameness of the scenery is

exceptional. A voyage along this part of the course of the Murray is accordingly most monotonous; one reach exactly resembles another; each bend is the counterpart of the previous one. The banks, almost everywhere, are very low, and in flood-time the water overflows in hundreds of places, and runs for miles before again joining the river, forming large lagoons, and what are known as "billabongs," which swarm with wild fowl of every kind. The width of the stream here varies from one hundred to three hundred yards. A little above Barmah, during flood-time, the river overflows, forming a vast sheet of water for about three miles on either side, running back through a thick forest of red gums, and joining Lake Moira, a splendid sheet of clear water in the midst of the timber. At such times the stream of the Murray is only to be traced by the line of trees which fringes its banks. The red gum timber of this district is some of the finest in the country, and affords employment to a great number of men. The principal saw-mills are at Echuca, but there are others at Corowa, Wahgunyah, Yarrawonga, and other places along the river. The timber, when cut, is dragged down during the summer months close to the water's edge, and during the winter flood season is taken by the barges up or down

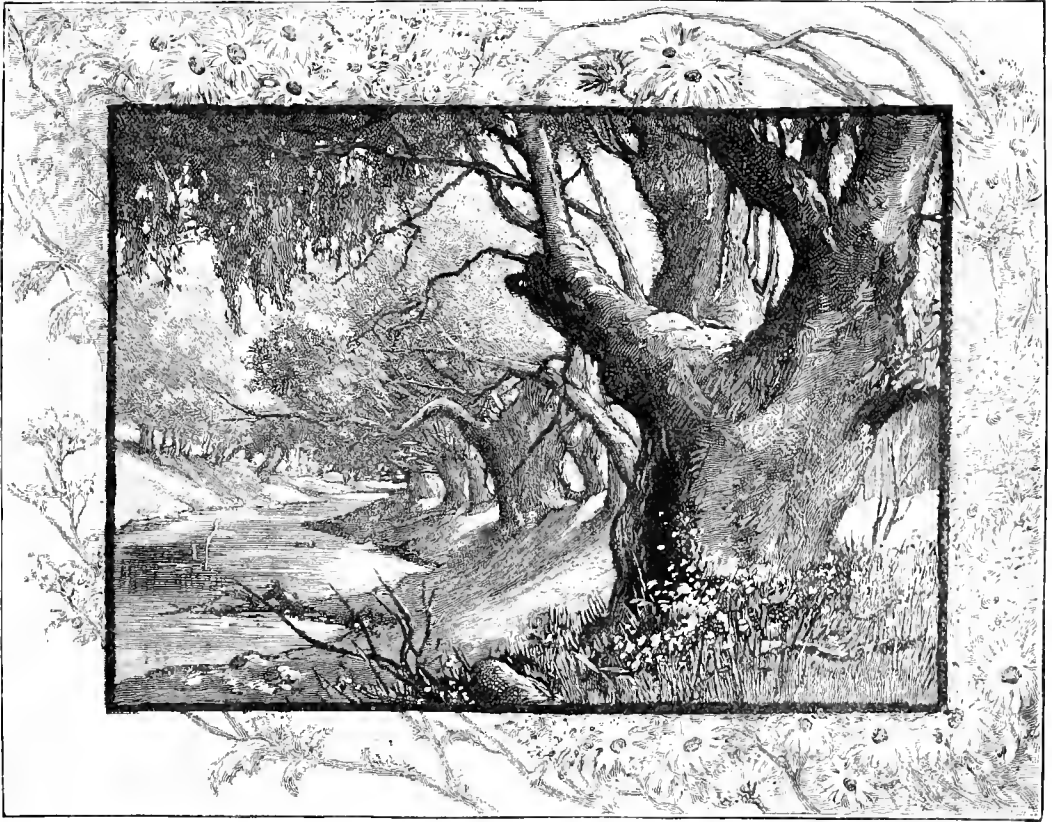


A "SNAG" BOAT

ON THE GOULBURN.

the river to the mills. These barges are huge flat-bottomed boats, with immense outriggers, to which are suspended by chains from twelve to sixteen large logs, some of them as much as thirty feet long, which hang hardly above the level of the water. You can barely see the tops of the logs as the barges, three or four at a time, are towed along by the flat-bottomed steam-tug. Neither tugs nor barges draw more than from three to two and a-half feet of water. Another way of conveying the logs is to let the barge float down the river with a large chain dragging from the stern. This keeps it in the middle of the stream, and effectually prevents it from running

aground. The plan is said to have been discovered by a man who, having stolen a chain, suspended it behind his boat, ready to be cut away in case of detection and pursuit. The trade in red gum on the Murray alone pays to the revenue of New South Wales about £18,000 a year in royalty. On the Victorian side licenses are issued by the Government to cut this valuable timber, but the revenue does not profit from these to nearly the same extent as that of New South Wales does from the royalty system.



ON THE CAMPASPE, NEAR ECHUCA.

The red gum forests extend back from the river banks a distance varying from half-a-mile to about three miles. Behind it is generally a thick fringe of box timber. On both sides the land immediately adjacent to the river is very poor, and being, for the most part, liable to be flooded, is of little value for purposes of cultivation; and it is not until you get some little distance back, and reach the box, that the soil improves, becoming of a reddish chocolate colour.

The stranger cannot fail to be struck with the difference between the Victorian townships scattered along the south bank of the river and those of the sister colony on the north bank. While the condition of the former is to all outward seeming most flourishing, the latter for the most part appear languishing, and show signs rather

of decay than of improvement. It is alleged that the fact is due to the land laws of the two colonies, the policy of Victoria being more liberal than that of her northern neighbour. We should add, however, that this state of things is completely reversed in the case of Albury and Corowa.

Not many miles above Echuca the Murray receives its confluent, the Goulburn, a stream very like itself in appearance, but considerably smaller, rising in the Tallarook Ranges, near Seymour, and in its course passing Maganabie, where lies the celebrated Tahbilk vineyard. On its banks are the mining centre of Rushworth and the thriving town of Shepparton, where it receives the Broken River.

Echuca is in point of importance the chief town on the Murray, although the population of Albury is a trifle larger. The former has about 5,000 inhabitants. It was once known as "Hopwood's Ferry," after a Mr. Hopwood, who, in the early days, made it a crossing-place for his stock. The town is situated on a peninsula formed by the Murray and Campaspe Rivers, and is connected with Moama, the New South Wales township on the opposite bank, by a magnificent iron bridge, constructed at a cost of £100,000 by the Governments of the two colonies. In consequence of the delay in throwing open this bridge to the public after its completion, it was forcibly opened by the inhabitants of the two towns in March, 1879. As a Victorian port, Echuca is still second only to Melbourne, the number of its vessels being greater than that of Geelong, though their aggregate tonnage is much smaller. It is connected by rail with Melbourne, and also with Deniliquin, which, situate in the midst of the vast plains of native grass and salt-bush known as the Riverina Country, is perhaps the greatest squatting centre in the world. By these railways thousands of sheep and cattle are annually sent down into Victoria, but the trade in live stock has been considerably injured by the imposition by the Victorian Government of a tax on imported stock, already referred to.

Besides being the centre of the red gum trade, and possessing fine large saw-mills in constant work in connection therewith, Echuca possesses an excellent vineyard. The sister township of Moama on the northern bank was formerly known as "Maiden's Point." It is in the county Cadel, so called after Captain Cadell, who, in 1853, with his steamer the *Lady Augusta*, and having on board Sir Henry Young, the then Governor of South Australia, and Lady Young, first successfully navigated the river as far as Swan Hill, a distance of 1,300 miles, and laid the foundation of the river traffic which, with varying fortunes, has been conducted without interruption ever since. Moama is, from a social and commercial point of view, only a portion of Echuca.

The Campaspe, which here joins the Murray River, rises in Mount Macedon, a range not more than about thirty miles from Melbourne. For the name Campaspe the classical dictionary seems to have been ransacked, the lady to whom it belonged having been intimately connected with the personal history of Alexander the Great. The most important towns on this river are Kyneton, lying nearly 1,700 feet above the sea, the centre of a large agricultural district, and noted for its farm stock, a circumstance which renders its name, Kine Town, singularly appropriate. Numerous

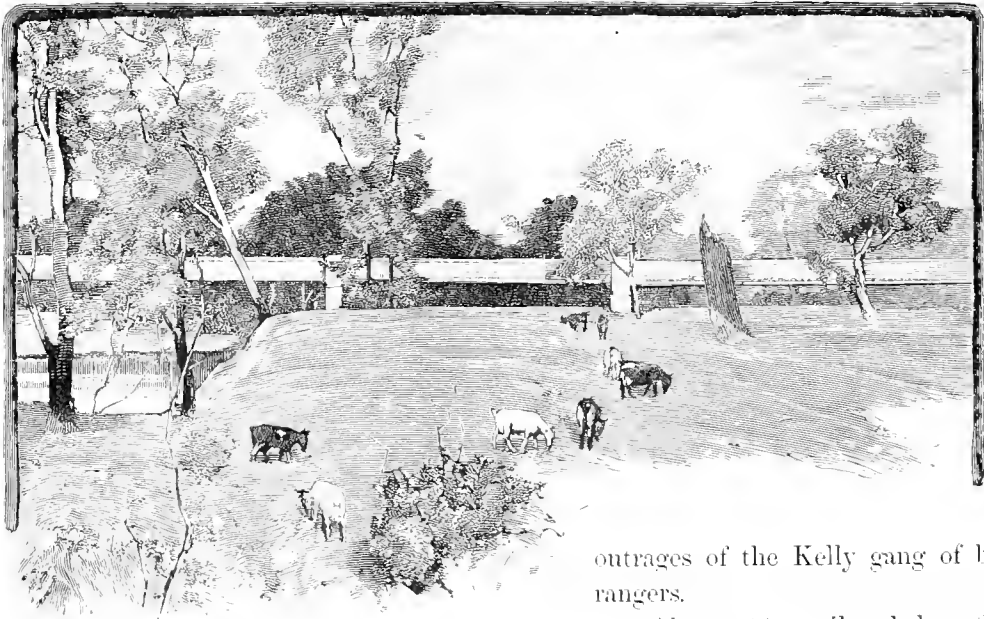
rich quartz-reefs exist in the neighbourhood, and the mining industry is more thriving than the agricultural, much of the best of the land having been worked out. Rochester, a town considerably lower down the stream, has become of importance of late years, and is still rapidly rising.

Below its junction with the Campaspe, the Murray becomes navigable at all seasons by the river steamers—large, flat-bottomed boats, with enormous funnels, and paddles that whip the creamy waters into foam. Each tugs after it, with much puffing and spluttering, as though it were very hard work indeed, a string of barges laden with wool from the Riverina and the banks of the Darling. They are going to discharge the huge, heavy bales at Echuca, whence the wool will be sent down by rail to Melbourne, and thence again shipped to London. At night they resemble huge monsters, groaning and snorting, as they breathe out flames, and gaze with fiery eyes into the darkness. These eyes are the lanterns fixed in the bows to throw a strong light upon the water ahead, so that the skipper may avoid the sunken logs or “snags,” which, if struck, would soon consign boat and cargo alike to the bottom. In the early days, many of these river skippers were Wesleyans, and on Sundays they would make the boat fast to the shore, and expound Scriptures to the crew and such of the passengers as they could induce to listen to them. Nowadays, however, either their religious zeal has grown cooler, or else the competition has become keener, for as a rule they steam not only night and day, but weekdays and Sundays alike. A story, for which we cannot vouch, is told of one of the old-fashioned kind of river skippers, who, being anxious not to lose time in taking aboard his cargo, and yet unwilling to outrage his conscience by working on the Sabbath, compromised the matter by putting on the clock two hours and a half, so as to make it Monday morning instead of 9.30 on Sunday night, the result being that he beat the opposition boat by just two hours in the run up to Echuca.

After leaving Echuca the river takes a sharp bend, and runs in a north-westerly direction for about 240 miles through a country once entirely pastoral, though of late years a large amount of selection has taken place, especially on the broad plains to the south. The Victorian Government has passed an Act having for its object the irrigation and settlement of this arid country, and has also opened negotiations to the same end with a firm of Canadian capitalists experienced in matters of irrigation, and at length has succeeded in coming to an agreement with them. There are no townships of consequence along the banks of the river at this part of its course, such settlements as there are being little more than collections of huts. Swan Hill, however, has a few local manufactures, and although the population of the town itself is small, of late years the place has developed a considerable river traffic, and has become a depôt for the supplies of the squatters and selectors around. At Kerang the Murray is joined by the Loddon, which rises in the Dividing Range, and receives the waters of the Bet-Bet, or McNeil's Creek. One of its principal sources is the Wombat Creek, upon which is built the beautiful town of Daylesford, lying more than 2,000 feet above the sea, and possessing nearly 4,000 inhabitants. The auriferous land surrounding it covers

nearly nine square miles, and contains ninety quartz-reefs, besides many alluvial workings.

About a hundred miles below Swan Hill, at Wakool Junction, the Murray receives from New South Wales the combined waters of the Edward River and the Billabong Creek, which meet at the township of Moulamein. The former is, in reality, a "billabong" of the Murray, being united to it at both ends; but the Billabong in name is not so in fact, but has a source of its own near Germanton, in Ten-Mile Creek, and runs a course of 700 miles almost parallel with that of the larger stream. On it is the little town of Jerilderie, once so notorious as the scene of one of the most daring



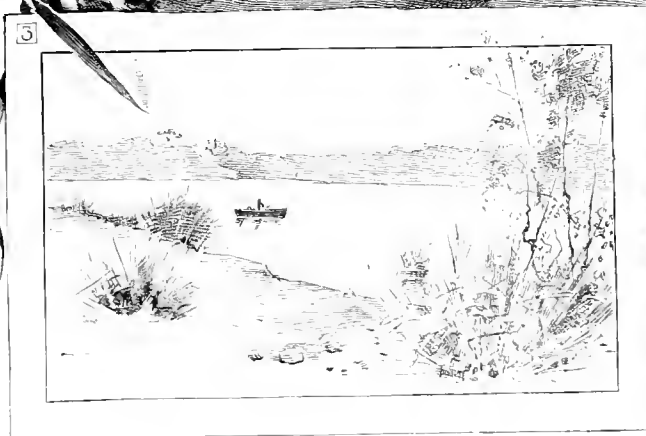
RAILWAY BRIDGE AT WAGGA WAGGA.

outrages of the Kelly gang of bush-rangers.

About 140 miles below Swan Hill, and 380 from Echuca, the

Murray receives a tributary almost as large as itself, the mighty Murrumbidgee, and it is to the plain between these two great rivers that the name Riverina originally belonged. Throughout its entire length below Albury the Murray has a tendency, owing to its slight fall, and the loose character of the soil through which it flows, to form for itself numerous channels, which diverge from, and again rejoin, the main stream; and just before its junction with the Murrumbidgee its northern bank is intersected with quite a network of these branches, of which the Edward River is by far the most important.

The Murrumbidgee takes its rise in the Great Dividing Range, at a part known as the Mumbong Mountains, and runs a course of 1,350 miles before it falls into the Murray. It is navigable as far up as Gundagai, a town which, considering that it has only 1,000 inhabitants, is singularly prosperous. The original township, on the river flat, was washed away in June, 1852, when eighty-one lives were lost, and immense damage was done to property; in fact, the original town was entirely obliterated. It is not



1. SWANS ON THE MURRAY.

2. THE MURRUMBIDGEE AT WAGGA WAGGA.

3. THE SNOWY RIVER

easy for the reader to realise what a flood means on one of these great Australian rivers. During the dry season which usually precedes it settlement has been progressing, and squatters' and selectors' homesteads have been erected and townships built upon the rich alluvial flats that border the shrunken stream. Suddenly the drought breaks up in torrents of rain, as much as seven or eight inches sometimes falling within twenty-four hours. Almost without warning an immense mass of water is hurled down the long-disused channel of the river, and what a few hours before was a stream only a few feet wide becomes a rushing mass of turbid waters, hundreds of yards in width, boiling and bubbling over its banks. Away go the labour of the farmer and the artisan, the tools of the digger, and the squatter's sheep and fencing. Very often masses of soil are detached from the banks, and, like floating islands, sent sailing down the current, sometimes with a living freight of bleating sheep and lowing cattle. Here a hayrick, there a stack of corn, or a weather-board house or log hut, is hurried away; whilst sometimes, alas! an infant's wail or a woman's shriek sounds faint and thin amid the turmoil of the waste of waters. Many a long year does it take before the ravages of such a flood are repaired, and too often they cause losses that time can never restore. In the case of Gundagai, however, everything possible has been done, and the new town has been built on the high bank, out of danger from future floods.

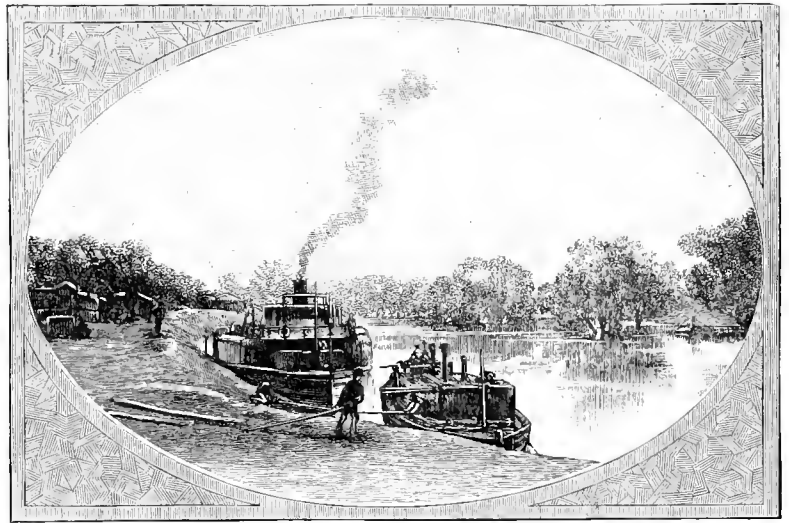
Besides Gundagai the Murrumbidgee has upon its banks the important towns of Wagga Wagga, Narandera, and Hay. The first of these, which is connected by rail with Sydney, being on the main line between that place and Melbourne, is noted as the place where Orton, the Tichborne Claimant, pursued his avocation as a butcher. It is the centre of a thriving pastoral and agricultural district, and has a population of about 5,000 persons. The railway bridge over the river on the line to Albury is a triumph of engineering skill, being constructed in the face of great difficulties, owing to the pressure exerted by the immense mass of water that flows down the channel in seasons of flood. Narandera has a population of about 1,700, while Hay is the principal receiving-depôt for the wool produced on the stations scattered along the banks of the Lachlan and the Murrumbidgee, and is a great port of call for the river steamers. On an average it sends down about 80,000 bales of wool during the year. It is a flourishing town, with excellent public works, including a handsome bridge about 400 yards in length, part of which is constructed to swing, so as to enable steamers to pass in the flood season when the river is navigable.

Above the junction of the Murrumbidgee with the Murray is Balranald, an important crossing-place for stock travelling from South Australia into Victoria, the passage being effected by means of punts. Besides its great affluent, the Lachlan, the Murrumbidgee has numerous other tributaries, many of which have important townships built upon them, especially on the high and fertile plateaux where they take their rise. The most important of the tributaries are the Umeralla, the Queanbeyan, and the Gasdradighee, besides the Yass and Tumut, both of which have upon their banks towns called by the same names as themselves.

The Lachlan, however, is sufficiently large to be considered a river of itself, especially

as it flows through some of the most fertile country in New South Wales. The length of the Lachlan proper is 700 miles, and it is said to drain an area of about 13,500 square miles. The principal places up its banks are Cowra, Parkes, and Forbes. Of these, the first is a town of about 1,300 inhabitants, in the midst of a district that is described as a veritable Eden. There seems to be hardly anything that will not grow in this favoured region, which is almost entirely taken up by thriving selectors and farmers; and, to add to its prosperity, the ground has been discovered to be highly auriferous, gold being found over an immense area, and frequently close to the surface. Besides this, the Milburn Creek Copper Mine is being successfully worked in the neighbourhood. Forbes is by far the largest town on the Lachlan proper, having a population of about 8,000. Here, too, rich gold discoveries have been made in the shape of quartz reefs, which have given a fresh impetus to a place that, in spite of its excellent soil, had begun to languish. The chief tributaries of the Lachlan are the Crookwell, Abererombie, Burrowa, and Belabula, upon the last of which is Carcoar, which rejoices in its gold and copper mines.

Below its junction with the Murrumbidgee the Murray continues to flow to the north-



THE RIVER DARLING AT BOURKE.

west. Its windings are here more intricate than in the upper part of its course. At Euston, a small township, chiefly known as a crossing-place for travelling stock from South Australia into Victoria, the river takes a sudden bend to the south, but soon turns once more to the north-west, through poor and barren country, until rather more than 200 miles further on, when Wentworth is reached. At this point it receives the waters of the last of its great tributaries, the magnificent river Darling, which collects the waters of nearly half the Dividing Range, draining in its course an area which, if we include the country of which the waters are received by its Queensland tributaries, is estimated at 231,000 square miles. The sources of the Darling, and the network of streams that unite to form it, are, perhaps, as intricate as the headwaters of any river in the world, and make it impossible to describe it with accuracy in the earlier part of its course: but it becomes clearly defined as the Darling a little above Walgett, where the Rivers Gwydyr and McIntyre unite to form it, and up to which place it is in extremely wet seasons navigable. Both the Gwydyr and the McIntyre run down from the high table-land known as the New England District of

New South Wales, and have a course respectively of 455 and 350 miles. Except during the rainy season, they are a mere chain of water-holes, and frequently in long droughts their channels are through a great part of their course mere beds of sand. This is due to the immense amount of evaporation that takes place in their course over the flat, sandy plains, and, perhaps, also to the water percolating through the loose soil and forming underground streams, which reappear where the surface is lower, and the subsoil less porous.

Another tributary of the Darling is the Namoi, which, rising in the Liverpool ranges, has a course of 600 miles. It is at its junction with the main river that Walgett is built, a distance of 1,650 miles from the junction of the Darling with the Murray. Walgett, though considerably improved of late years, and of some importance as a depôt for stores, has not much to be said in its favour as a place of residence, being a mere collection of huts on a scorched and sandy plain. The Castlereagh, though it has a channel some 300 miles in length, makes but little use of it, being for the most part dry. The Macquarie, however, the next affluent of the Darling, is a stream of much more importance, having a course of 750 miles, and a comparatively constant flow. Rising in the western slope of the Blue Mountains, it receives numerous tributaries, of which the chief are Campbell's Creek and the Fish, Turon, and Ball Rivers. In the lower part of its course the Macquarie stretches out into vast marshes, covered with reeds, the tops of which are just seen above the water.

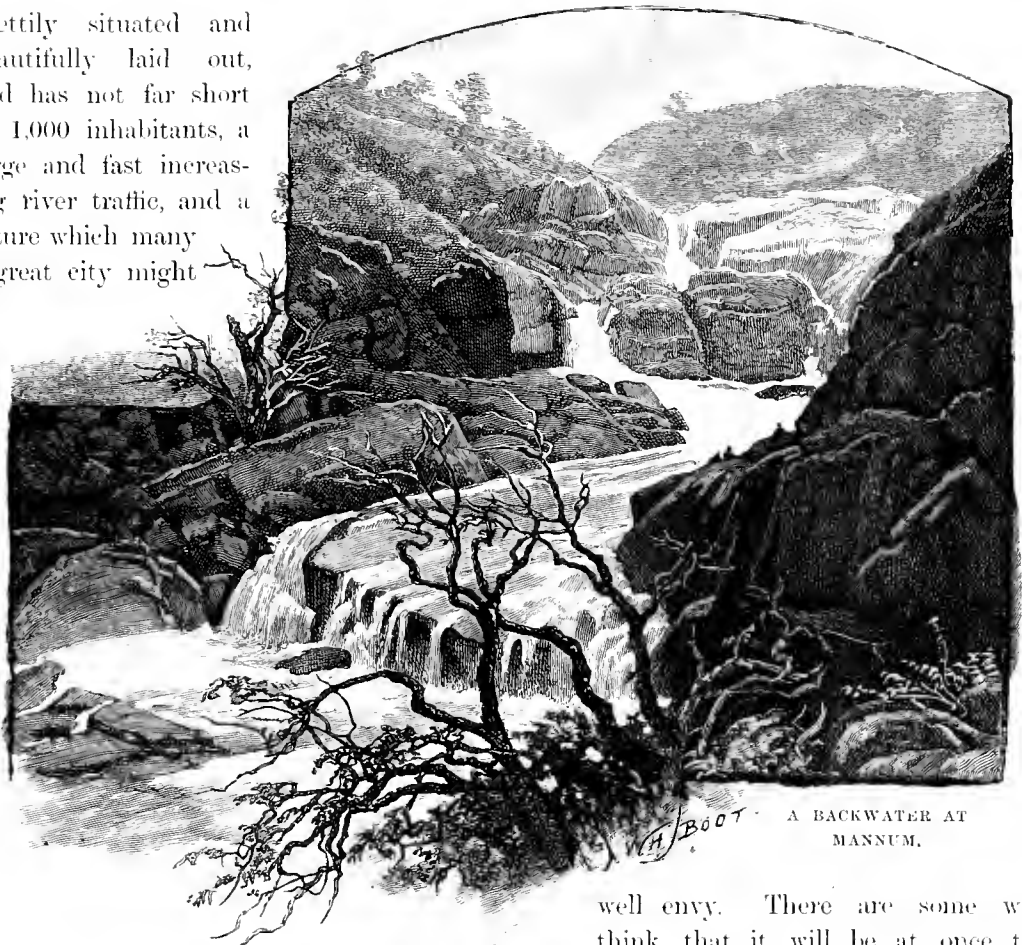
One of the most important towns on the river is Bourke, the depôt for the stores of half the stations on the river and in the country away back. It is connected by rail with Sydney, and by this line in dry seasons, when the river is not navigable, the greater part of the Darling wool is sent down for shipment. Indeed, this route is sometimes chosen in preference to that by the river, for though the cost of transport by rail is, of course, greater than that by water, this is counterbalanced by the heavy insurance rates that have to be paid on wool sent down by the boats, owing to the great risk of loss by fire to which it is exposed from the carelessness of the crews.

At the junction of the Darling with the Murray is Wentworth. This town is



THE MURRAY FROM MURRAY BRIDGE RAILWAY STATION (p. 163).

prettily situated and beautifully laid out, and has not far short of 1,000 inhabitants, a large and fast increasing river traffic, and a future which many a great city might



A BACKWATER AT
MANNUM.

well envy. There are some who think that it will be at once the

Washington and the Chicago of the future Dominion of Australia. Situated at the junction of two such rivers as the Murray and the Darling, it is also the natural terminus and meeting-place for the great inland railways of the adjacent colonies. The proposed Victorian line is to terminate at Yelta, on the south bank of the Murray, and directly opposite to the town of Wentworth, and the proposed South Australian line along the course of the river from the north-west bend would terminate in the township itself; while a line following the course of the Murrumbidgee, sure eventually to be constructed, would give it communication with Sydney, and a Darling River line would connect it with Wilcannia and Bourke, and bring to it for distribution the produce of Central Australia. The town is already the depôt for the supply and traffic of the interior during the large part of the year when the river is unnavigable, and with railways to carry its supplies, it would become one of the first commercial cities of Australia. Nor is its situation less favourable from a political point of view. Far removed, and yet easily accessible, from the great capitals of Sydney, Adelaide, and Melbourne, easily to be reached by water from Western Australia and Queensland, and generally from towns along the coast, it seems so placed by nature as to incur the jealousy of none and

enjoy the fostering care of all. Its very name seems to mark it out as the future capital of federated Australia, for it is called after William Charles Wentworth, to whose patriotic exertions New South Wales owes her free constitution.

Though not actually born in the colony, Wentworth came here when quite young, and during a long life did perhaps more for Australia than any other man who ever entered it. Eminent as lawyer, scholar, wit, and politician, he almost outdid his political services by his efforts as a social reformer in a community at that time menaced by the lawlessness of the convict element on the one hand and by autocratic officialism on the other. When quite a youth, he performed a feat of exploration which of itself would entitle him to be mentioned with respect: and whilst an undergraduate at Cambridge he distinguished himself in the competition for a University prize poem on the subject of Australia. The prize was won by the talented Winthrop Mackworth Praed, but Wentworth's effort is now admitted by experts to be the best. In his poem are some lines which seem to be prophetic; it ends with couplets that every Australian should know by heart:—

“May this thy last-born infant then arise
To glad thy heart and greet thy parent eyes
And Australasia rise, with flag unfurled,
A new Britannia in another world.”

After leaving this town, the traveller by river-boat will come to no place of importance until he reaches the South Australian border, upon the 141st parallel, where the steamer has to lie-to in order to be overhauled by the Custom House authorities. Indeed, this system of jealously guarding against the introduction of each other's commodities on the part of the different colonies is a nuisance at every turn, and will do more than anything to prevent them from becoming a great and united nation. It is almost as if one had to undergo an overhaul and be mulcted in heavy protective duties in passing from one English county to another. Here are men of the same race and blood, speaking the same language—nay, often members of the same family—who, because they happen to live on opposite sides of an imaginary line, must needs keep guard against each other as if they belonged to two belligerent nations. This is not the place to argue whether Protection be a fallacy, or Free Trade a delusion, or to discuss abstract principles of political economy, but for people situated as the Australian colonists are, a handful of men on the fringe of a wilderness, to establish such a system of Little Pedlington protection against one another only fails to be ridiculous by reason of its injurious results.

Throughout this part of its course, and, indeed, until Morgan is almost reached, the scenery of the Murray is very dull, as it winds in and out, its banks sometimes bare and sometimes fringed with stunted timber. Here and there a splitter or selector has planted his hut, and strives, by a rough system of irrigation, to win a scanty livelihood out of the thirsty soil. After leaving Wentworth, the stream is seldom less than two hundred yards in width, and occasionally spreads out into immense sheets of water. As the traveller approaches Morgan he will notice that the scenery greatly improves, and that the country is much more fertile. The land here is all taken up by agricultural

and grazing farms, and the river banks have been extensively planted with willows, which give a pretty and home-like appearance to the landscape. Corn is extensively grown, and the soil is sufficiently good to give from eight to ten bushels per acre. The farmers, a class not usually addicted to taking an over-sanguine view, all seem contented with their prospects, and their comfortable circumstances are indicated by pretty and well-kept gardens along the river banks, and often running down to the water's edge. Here, on the one bank, are high cliffs, which are water-marked to a considerable height, and facing these, on the opposite side, far away over miles of rich alluvial soil, are seen other cliffs, corresponding to them. Between them winds the river, and they no doubt indicate the limits of its stream in times gone by. If this supposition be correct, it must have been, indeed, a giant water-course, a fitting channel to connect the ocean with the vast inland sea which, according to scientific authorities, once covered the greater part of the interior of Australia. Though shrunk from these mammoth proportions, it is still a splendid stream, and probably destined in time to come to be the great waterway of a rich and populous nation.

After entering South Australian territory the river turns sharply to the south, leaving on its right bank Lake Limbro and the extensive neighbouring swamps, until it reaches the Great Pyap (or South) Bend. Here it once more turns at right angles to its course, and with many windings again bears away to the north-west for a considerable distance, till at length, weary of its long journey, it takes a sharp turn and hurries to the south, eager to cool its heated waters in the cold waves of the Southern Ocean. This point is called the North-West Bend. Here we come to the Morgan of which we have been speaking, a thriving river-port, connected by rail with Kapunda and Adelaide, and possessing a fine wharf, fitted with steam and hydraulic cranes.

Flowing on for a distance of nearly 100 miles, the river reaches the point where it is within fifty miles of Adelaide. Here lies the little town of Mammoo, which is one of the chief ports for the shipment of goods for places up the river, and for the landing of wool for reshipment at Port Adelaide. It possesses a fine, dry dock, and has extensive wharves, and other accommodation for unloading barges and steamers, but otherwise is of little importance, though a prosperous and picturesque township.

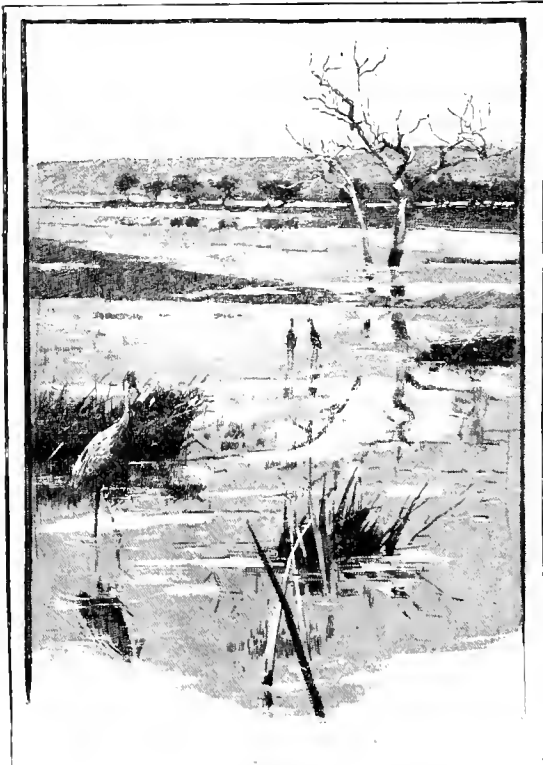
A notable feature of this part of the river is the magnificent bridge on the railway between Adelaide and Melbourne, constructed at an expense of £200,000, about double the estimated cost. This excess was due partly to its immense length (for it is more than half-a-mile long), and partly to the difficulty in obtaining solid foundation for the support of the immense piers. It is remarkable that this was more especially the case on the land side, the bottom in the bed of the river being much firmer. Its extreme length was rendered necessary by the great width of the river in time of flood, and for this reason also the piers had to be of immense strength. Our illustration on p. 160 shows a section of the river near this spot.

The reader will be disappointed to learn that the mouth of this noble river is by no means worthy of its size and importance. Exposed to the full fury of the Southern Ocean, it is made still more dangerous by the fact that the treacherous sands at its mouth are continually shifting; and it can be entered only by small coasting

steamers, and not by them without difficulty and danger. In order to obviate the inconvenience as much as possible, a railway has been constructed between Port Mannum and Port Adelaide, by which the greater portion of the wool brought down the river is conveyed to the latter place for shipment. The expense of these repeated loadings and unloadings, and the cost of land carriage to Port Adelaide, is considerable, and severely hampers and hinders the river traffic.

A considerable proportion, however, of the vessels that descend the Murray, instead of disembarking their cargoes at Port Mannum, go on to Goolwa. This town lies

on the west bank of the river, about seven miles from its mouth, though in a direct line it is only about a mile from the ocean. It possesses an excellent harbour, with a depth of water sufficient to allow large vessels to lie at anchor if they could only get within it. Were the River Murray the great waterway of Australia that it should be, Goolwa should be its New Orleans. It is the oldest-established port on the river, and even under the present disadvantageous circumstances does a large and daily increasing trade. It has, moreover, fine wharves and yards for the building and repair of steamers. It was at one time intended to connect Goolwa with the ocean by a channel cut through the sands, and plans for the purpose were prepared by an eminent South Australian engineer; but since the construction of the railway from Mannum to Adelaide, the project has been abandoned, at all events for the present. However desirable it might be to have a direct channel between the river and

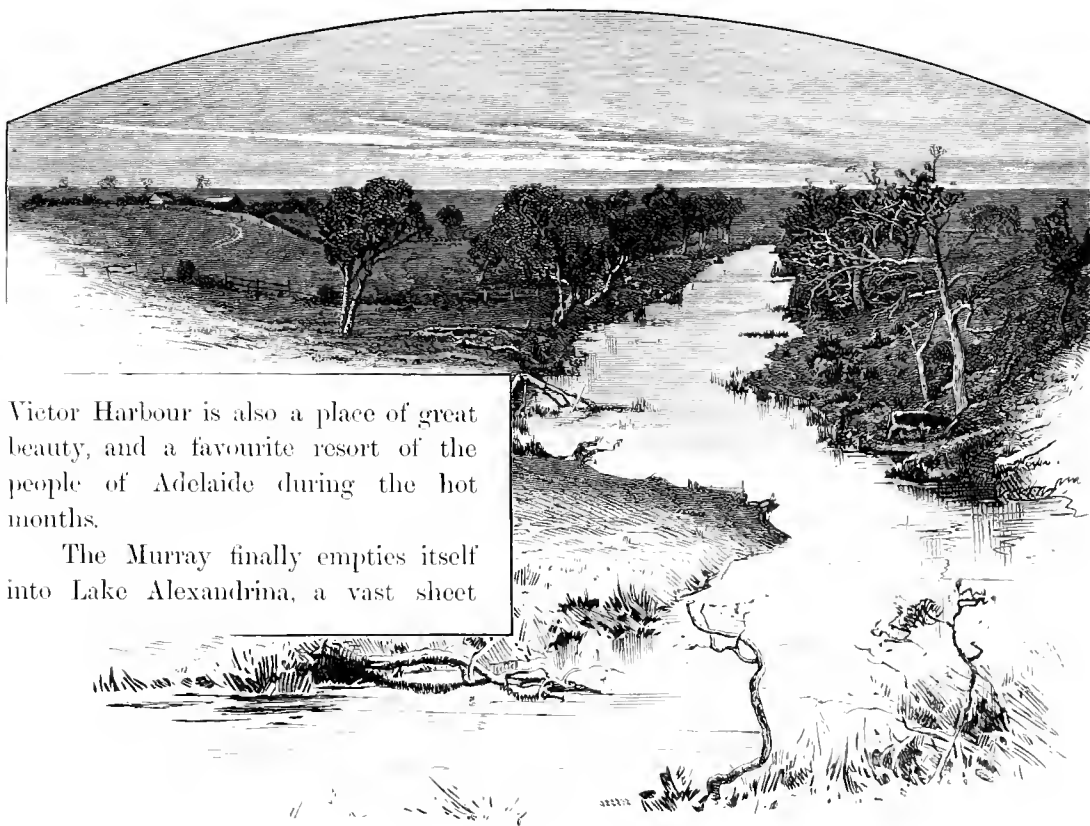


SWAMPS.

the open sea, it was thought that, while the cost would certainly be enormous, the undertaking might not after all be successful, since the sands at the mouth of the Murray are continually shifting, and the channels silting up, besides which, vessels entering would be exposed without shelter to the full fury of the Southern Ocean. It is further alleged that even if a channel were cut, the scour of the river is not sufficiently strong to keep it clear. Perhaps the engineering difficulties would prove insuperable.

Goolwa is connected by rail with Victor Harbour, a small bight of Encounter Bay, which is, perhaps, strictly the port of the Murray. An island called Granite Island, from its being entirely composed of that stone, is here connected with the mainland

by a solid pier, which from a width of 245 feet at its base gradually slopes upward to a breadth of 30 feet at its summit. From Granite Island a causeway and jetty further extend a distance of 300 feet into deep water, and here woolships can now lie and take in cargo. These works, designed by Sir John Coode, have much improved the harbour, though it is still far from safe, as is sufficiently shown by the fact that the pier and jetty were repeatedly injured by storms in the course of their construction.



Victor Harbour is also a place of great beauty, and a favourite resort of the people of Adelaide during the hot months.

The Murray finally empties itself into Lake Alexandrina, a vast sheet

CURRENCY CREEK.

of water, abounding in shoals and quicksands; it is about forty miles long, and of such extent that from the middle it is not easy to make out the low and sandy shores. Currency Creek also falls into this lake, which is connected with a smaller sheet of water called Lake Albert, and also with the Coorong, a long, narrow estuary which runs along the coast to the south-east for about eighty miles, separated from the ocean by only a narrow belt of sand.

In the earlier part of its course, above Albury, and again after reaching Morgan, until entering Lake Alexandrina, the river scenery may be fairly called beautiful, and in other parts it is not without a certain picturesqueness of its own. But it cannot be denied that the Murray is for the most part terribly monotonous, and at night

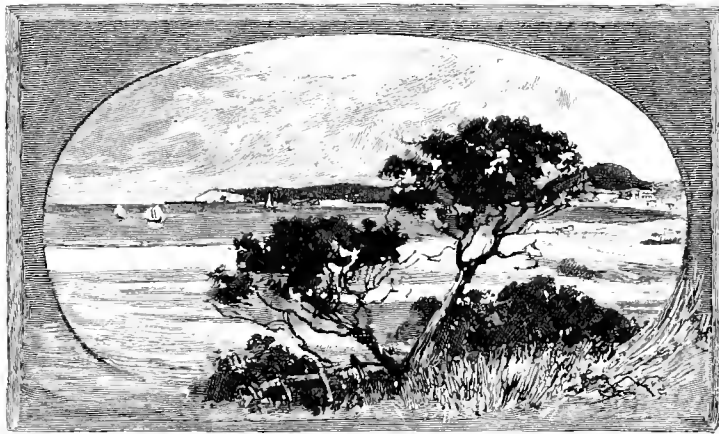
this monotony gives place to that awful feeling of utter loneliness and desolation so characteristic of Australian scenery generally. Indeed, nothing can be more weird than a night-camp on the shore of an Australian river or lagoon. The traveller has seen the sun rise like a ball of fire above the eastern horizon, and all day long has pursued his lonely journey over the flat sandy plains. At night he hobbles his tired horse, and turns him loose to crop the few blades of stunted grass, and, after swallowing a piece of dry damper, washed down by a pannikin of tea, if he is lucky enough to find wood to make a fire, lays himself down to rest beside it, with his warm blue blanket round him, and his head resting on the padding of his saddle, propped upright against a tree or sand-hillock. All is solitude. On one side stretches the expanse of plain, on the other the waters of the river spread away till they are lost to sight, and blend with the evening mists. The stillness is only broken by the hum of the mosquito and the croaking of the frogs, by the almost human shriek of the curlew or the whirr of the water-fowl overhead, and by the slight splash as they fall lightly on the scarcely ruffled waters. As the fire dies down into a smouldering heap of embers, the dingy's dismal howl is borne upon the scarce perceptible breeze that just rustles the strips of bark hanging like dangling ribbons from yonder solitary gum, and the tired horse pricks his cold ears and sniffs the gale, and the sleeper turns uneasily in his fitful slumber. Small wonder that the natives people these solitudes with shapes hideous, terrible, and vague, or that the earlier settlers told with bated breath of the Bunyip, the offspring of the river slime and ooze, that at such times would appear to the belated traveller. Nor is the scene without effect even upon the cultured mind that rejects morbid fancies. The following lines, by the Bishop of Ballarat, well describe the feelings of such a one as he walks musing at nightfall beside the solitary waters of the Murray:—

“I tread thy brink, Australian Nile,
And in the heated west afar
Glow, where the fierce sun sank erewhile,
Across vast plains, the evening star.
From yonder marsh, the serpent's haunt,
The wild swans rise in dusky cloud;
The bittern's melancholy chaunt
Shrills through the calm air clear and loud.

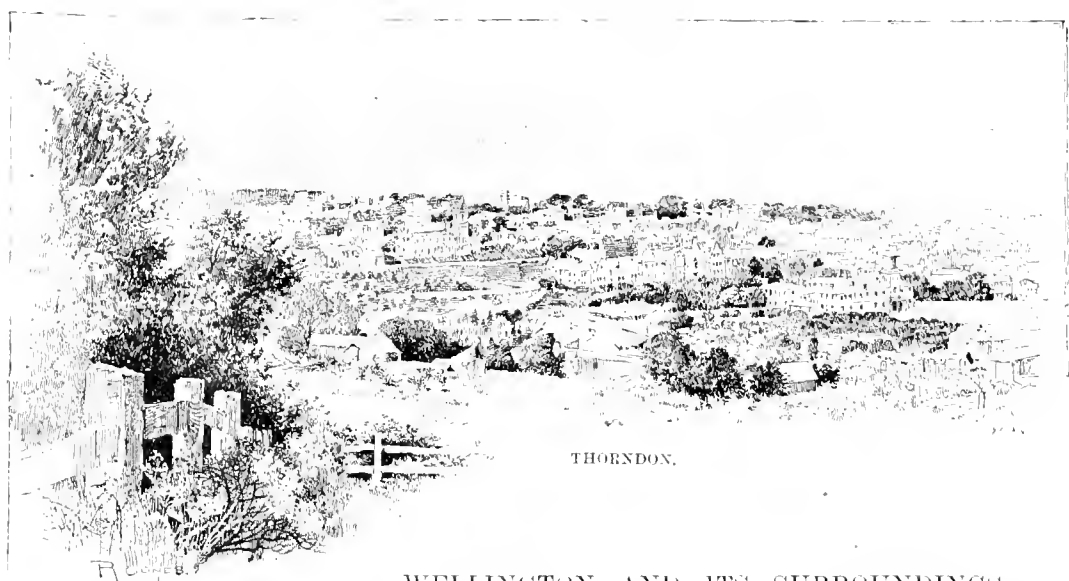
“A sable form stands near: the child
Of yonder boundless woods, that lie
To south and east—forbidding—wild—
His father's home in years gone by.
Where erst, ere yet the stranger came,
He loved to chase with club and spear
The land's unshapely forest game,
By tangled brake and lonely mere.”

As we turn away, after tracing the course of this magnificent stream through three colonies, and see the wealth that it bears upon its waters, and the flocks and herds that are fattened upon its banks, we can hardly repress a sigh of regret that it should not have

an outlet worthy of it, so that stately ships might sail in and out and carry their cargoes far into the heart of the country. In such case it might well stand as a rival to the Amazon or the Mississippi. Unfortunately, it is without this advantage: its waters struggle to the ocean amid shifting sands and almost stagnant lakes, through channels devious, shallow, and difficult, whilst engineering skill seems powerless to provide what nature has failed to give. Whether the defect can be rectified in years to come is yet to be seen. As it is, the Murray's course resembles the life of a man of vast strength and talent, who, after a stormy and adventurous youth, and a manhood passed in dignity and usefulness, at length in his old age sinks into an obscure grave, unhonoured and imbecile. Nevertheless, the solid, honest work of his prime lives on, and his life, after all, has not been spent in vain.



DISTANT VIEW OF GRANITE ISLAND.



WELLINGTON AND ITS SURROUNDINGS.

Captain Cook—An Astute Savage—The Early Colonists—The New Zealand Land Company—Taking Possession—The Site—Early Days—The Harbour—The Te Aro Flat—Thorndon—The Hutt—McNab's Gardens—The Hutt Valley—The Wairarapa Valley—The Manawatu Gorge—The Ngahauranga Gorge—Rauparaha.

THE very name of Cook's Strait, on which the city of Wellington is situated, carries one back to the time, about the middle of the eighteenth century, when Europe first gained any accurate information of New Zealand. True, as early as 1642, the Dutch navigator, Tasman, entered Golden or Massacre Bay, in the north of Nelson province; but the inhospitable reception accorded him by the natives made him beat a retreat: and for more than a century after his discovery of the islands it was supposed that they formed part of the great Terra Australis Incognita. Not till 1769, when Captain Cook sailed round the North and Middle Islands, was this error rectified. "You are also," so ran the instructions of Captain Cook, "with the consent of the natives, to take possession, in the name of the King of Great Britain, of convenient situations in such countries as you may discover, that have not already been discovered or visited by any other Power; and to distribute among the inhabitants such things as will remain as traces and testimonies of your having been there; but if you find that the countries so discovered are uninhabited, you are to take possession of them for His Majesty, by setting up proper marks and inscriptions as first discoverers and possessors." In accordance with these general instructions, Cook landed at various points, and took possession of the country. And even at the present day anyone who scrambles along the east coast will find, sprouting vigorously among the rocks, where it can get any foothold of soil, Captain Cook's cabbage—weedy cabbage, to be sure, but indisputable testimony of his having been there. The herds of wild swine also which infest the retired bush country in the interior testify to Captain Cook's visit, being the lineal descendant of the pigs which he put on shore.*

Though Captain Cook suggested the colonisation of New Zealand, it was not till seventy years later that any steps were taken to carry out the idea. In the interval, however, parts of Australia and Tasmania were colonised, and formed into penal

* *Vide p. 1 ff.*

settlements. As might be expected after the establishment of colonies in Australia, a more or less frequent intercourse arose between those settlements and New Zealand; and various travellers of the time, Nicholas, Savage, and others, recorded their impressions of visits paid to New Zealand. Meanwhile, a considerable whaling trade sprang up on the New Zealand coasts, and small communities of whalers, consisting often of runaway sailors or escaped convicts, established themselves on the most valuable fishing-grounds. The visit of two of the most influential of the North Island chiefs, Hongi and Waikato, to England in 1820 drew the further attention of the British nation to New Zealand and its inhabitants. Those two chiefs, who were much lionised by London society, posed in England as most devout converts to the Christian faith, and returned loaded with the presents of their admirers. Hongi, who had received valuable gifts from George IV., disposed of them in Sydney on his return, and invested the proceeds in firearms and ammunition. Returning to New Zealand, this amiable Christian, who was chief of the Agapuhi, in the Bay of Islands, carried on a war of extermination against the tribes of the South, who were defenceless against powder and shot. Meanwhile, the conduct of the white population of New Zealand demanded the attention of the home authorities. From time to time, through the missionaries, reports reached England of the lawlessness and anarchy which pre-



NĪKAU PALMS, THE HUTT.



MCNAB'S GARDENS, THE HUTT.

vailed amongst the whalers, many of whom had led a life of crime, and now found themselves able to offend with impunity. Various schemes were set on foot for the regular colonisation of the islands. In 1825 a company was formed in London for the purpose of

establishing a settlement in New Zealand; but the leader of the expedition, after purchasing some land at Hokianga, abandoned the enterprise. In 1837 another company, called the New Zealand Association, was formed for purposes of colonisation, but it, too, effected nothing. At length in 1839 was formed "The New Zealand Land Company," and in that year an expedition was despatched under the command of Colonel William Wakefield, who was instructed to proceed to Cook's Strait, and to secure from the natives a large amount of land on its north shore.

The *Tory* was the vessel in which the expedition set sail. She was a ship of 400 tons, armed with eight guns, and commanded by Captain Chaffers, of the Royal Navy; and besides the necessary stores and provisions, she carried abundance of goods for barter with the Maoris. The voyage was a prosperous one—of the sort which has become since then so commonplace—the time being passed in learning Maori, writing a manuscript newspaper, shark-hunting, bird-shooting, and such occupations. The *Tory* sighted New Zealand ninety-six days after leaving Plymouth, and after some exploration of the north shores of the Middle Island, entered Port Nicholson, on the south of North Island, on September 20, under the pilotage of Dicky Barret, a noted Pakeha Maori of that time, who had led an eventful life in various parts of New Zealand. After some days' parleyings with the chiefs of the various tribes occupying the shores of Port Nicholson, Colonel Wakefield carried to a successful issue his negotiations for the purchase of land round Port Nicholson, and along the valley of the Eritonga, or, as it was afterwards called, the Hutt River. On September 30, at the invitation of the natives, he landed at Petone, and took formal possession, running up the New Zealand flag on a flagstaff which had been previously erected by the Maoris for the purpose. Simultaneously the flag rose at the main of the *Tory*, to the inpressive music of twenty-one guns, and so the settlement became an accomplished fact.

The scene at Petone on the occasion of ceding possession of the land to Colonel Wakefield is thus described by his nephew, Mr. Edward J. Wakefield, himself an eye-witness:—"We were joyfully received by the assemblage, which consisted of about 300 men, women, and children. Of these 200 were men, and had armed themselves with the 120 muskets they had received from us, spears, tomahawks, pointed sticks, stone and wooden clubs, &c. Even a dozen umbrellas which had formed part of the payment figured in the ranks as conspicuously as the Emperor of Morocco's son's parasol has figured in more recent battalions. Everyone was dressed in some of the new clothes; their heads were neatly arranged and ornamented with feathers of the albatross or huia; handsome mats hung in unison with the gay petticoats of the women and the new blankets of the warriors; the latter were bedizened with waistcoats and shirts, and belted with cartouche-boxes and shot-belts. It was high holiday with everybody, and a universal spirit of hilarity prevailed among the excited multitude. . . . Warepori then took his station at the head of one of the parties into which the fighting-men were divided, 'Dog's-ear' having marshalled the others at a little distance. Warepori was dressed in a large hussar cloak belonging to my uncle, to which he had taken a fancy, and brandished a handsome green-stone 'mere. His party having seated themselves in ranks, he suddenly rose from the ground, and leaped high into the air with a tremendous yell. He was instantly

initiated by his party, who sprang out of their clothes as if by magic, and left them in bundles on the ground. They then joined in a measured guttural song recited by their chief, keeping exact time by leaping high at each louder intonation, brandishing their weapons with the right hand, and slapping the thigh with the left as they came heavily to the ground. The war-song warmed as it proceeded; though still in perfect unison, they yelled louder and louder, leaped higher and higher, brandished their weapons more fiercely, and dropped with the smack on the thigh more heavily as they proceeded, till the final spring was accompanied by a concluding whoop which seemed to penetrate one's marrow. After this preparatory stimulant, the two parties ran down to the beach and took up positions facing each other at about 200 yards distance. They then repeated the dance; and at its conclusion the two parties passed each other at full speed, firing their guns as they ran, and took up a fresh position nearer to each other."

The spot selected as the site of the town (at first called Britannia, but afterwards re-christened Wellington, at the request of the directors of the company) was the shore of a bay at the south-west corner of Port Nicholson, named Lambton Harbour, in honour of the Earl of Durham, governor of the company. Other localities on the shores of Port Nicholson were named after other members of the company who had been enthusiastic in the cause of colonisation. The flat to the north of the city was named Thorndon, from Thorndon Hall, the residence of Lord Petre. The Eritonga was re-christened the Hutt, after Mr. William Hutt. The Island of Matui, since used as a quarantine station, was named Somes Island, after Mr. Joseph Somes, or Soames, the deputy-governor of the company, whilst the bluff that forms the eastern head of the port was named Pencarrow Head, after the residence of Sir William Molesworth.

Such was the origin of the now important city of Wellington, which has since become the capital of the colony. The settlement grew apace. The first emigrant ship—the *Aurora*—anchored in Port Nicholson on the 22nd January, 1840. Under the New Constitution Act the first elections took place, and Dr. Featherstone, the first Superintendent of the Province of Wellington, met the first Council and chose his Executive in October, 1853. As time progressed, Auckland was found to be an unsuitable spot for the capital, owing to the fact of its lying at one extremity of the colony; and Wellington, the first founded of New Zealand cities, was chosen as the most central and convenient for the seat of Government. From its importance as the capital, as from the magnificent character of its harbour, Wellington must continue to occupy the foremost place among the cities of the colony.

Lying on the outside edge of the volcanic region of the North Island, Wellington is liable to frequent though not very serious shocks of earthquake. This has led to a more abundant use of wood as material in the construction of public buildings than is to be found in other large towns, though of late years the more substantial materials—brick, stone, and concrete—have been superseding wood. Wellington boasts that in the matter of wooden buildings it beats the world; and it must be admitted that the Government buildings, Houses of Parliament, and the Governor's residence are very fine structures.

At first sight, on approaching Wellington from the harbour, the most striking feature of the city is its scarcity of level ground. It seems as if walking in Wellington must

be, perforce, either up hill or down. On entering the city you find, however, that there is a rim of level space to the harbour, consisting mostly of reclaimed ground. When the first settlers came out to Wellington, the beach ran along the line of what is now the principal thoroughfare, which preserves the record of its former history in its name, Lambton Quay. Behind Lambton Quay the ascent commences, so that in the olden time whoever wished to leave the beach must climb. Now, however, this street is some considerable distance from the quay proper, the bay having been pushed back by steady reclamation, and many acres of land thus made available for public buildings and warehouses.

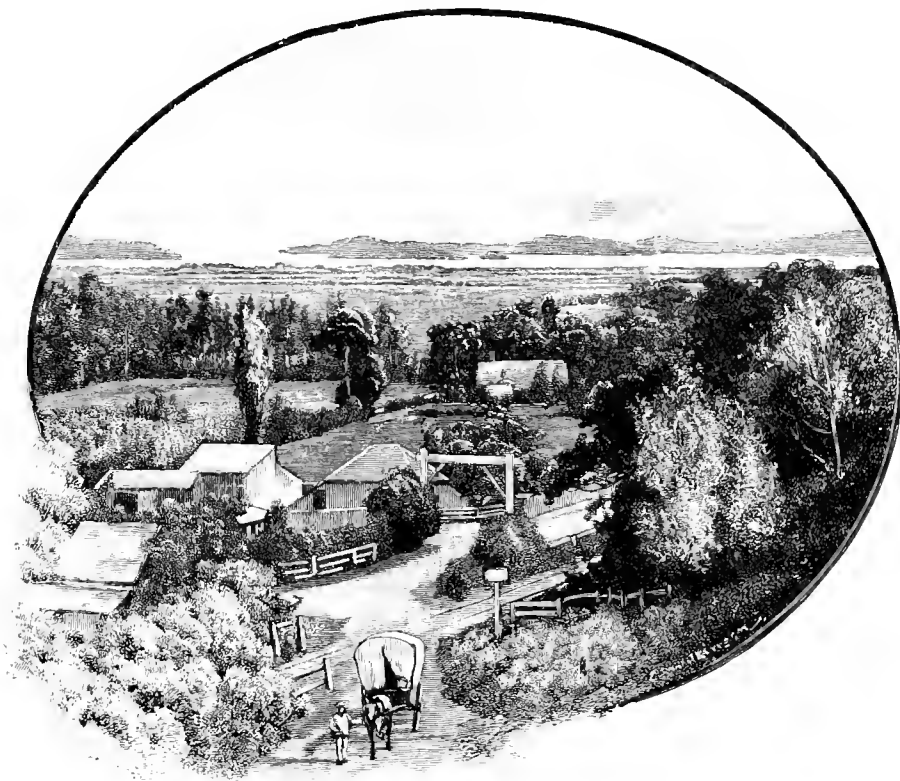
The ground configuration being such as has been described, the construction of streets and houses has had to adapt itself to the lie of the ground, so that Wellington looks like a series of terraces, as indeed it is; and the houses, often picturesquely built, and nestling in well-cultivated gardens, have all the advantages of prominent and airy position. On ascending the hill that backs the city, whence it is possible to command a most extensive view, you find that in one direction there is a large stretch of level ground. This is the Te Aro Flat—towards which the overflow of population is steadily setting. In Te Aro are some of the principal public buildings—the lunatic asylum, the hospital, the college, and the barracks of the armed constabulary. At its east end Wellington expands into Thorndon—this being the aristocratic part of the city, where the reticulations of Civil Servicedom weave themselves round Government House. Behind the Roman Catholic Cathedral is the Museum, in which the Maori House is a most complete specimen of native construction, and contains a unique collection of Maori carvings, stone implements, and textile fabrics. The house is forty-three feet by eighteen, and was built by the tribe most famous for their skill in carving—the Ngatikaipoho, who reside on the shores of the Bay of Plenty.

About 100 acres of the hilly ground behind the city are laid out as botanical gardens. Here the beautiful native vegetation is carefully preserved, while the more open glades and lawns are planted with beautiful specimen trees, natives of many lands. Particularly charming is the natural gully, in the shade of which the many beautiful New Zealand ferns flourish as vigorously as in the virgin forest.

The chief suburban resort where the citizens of Wellington make holiday is the Hutt, a small township on the alluvial ground at the mouth of the Hutt River, embedded in luxuriant gardens and plantations. The road from Wellington to the Hutt lies along the edge of the harbour, and makes a delightful drive. The leading attraction in the village is McNab's Gardens, which are pleasantly laid out in lawns and flower-beds. "On entering the gate, an avenue, some seventy yards long, bordered with handsome tree-ferns, leads up to the house, a quaint gabled building, smothered in Cloth-of-Gold roses. In the front of the house is a smooth-cropped lawn, dotted over with some of the finest specimen conifers in the colony. A labyrinth of walks conducts one through the flower-garden; and nothing could better illustrate the accommodating geniality of the New Zealand climate than the magnificent collection of plants that Mr. McNab has gathered round him from every latitude and longitude.

The two chief exits from Wellington are both extremely picturesque. That by

the Hutt Valley passes over the Rimutaka range through scenery of great loveliness and grandeur. Great forest trees, a rich undergrowth of ferns, and clear pebbly watercourses making their way amongst moss-covered boulders—such is the character of the route by which the railway crosses the Rimutaka range on its lonely way to the Wairarapa Plain. The highest point reached by the railway lies about 2,389 feet above sea-level. Just beyond this summit is “Siberia”—a spot where, even in summer, “all the



THE HUTT VALLEY.

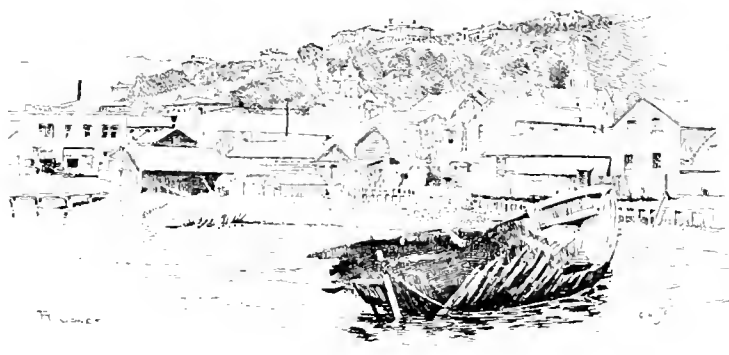
battles of the winds concur.” Since 1880, when a very serious accident occurred at this part of the line, the carriages being blown off the rails and several passengers killed, special precautions have been taken. In ascending or descending the steep incline two locomotives are used, one before and one behind the train, and a breakwind has been erected at the dangerous point: besides which, there is a third rail in the middle, rising eighteen inches above the ground, and the wheels of the engine are so arranged that they press on the sides of the centre rail and act as a break. After descending the further side of this remarkable line, on which the character of the scenery is no less grand than on the Hutt side, you come suddenly out on the Wairarapa Plain, not far from the Wairarapa Lake. The Valley, a broad plain lying between two ranges of hills, presents few features of interest to the lover of the

picturesque, beyond the prosperous farms and townships, which abound here as in most fertile plains. This route, if continued past Masterton, would lead on to the Manawatu River at the gorge, and thence through the seventy-mile bush to Napier.

The configuration of the North Island in its southern half is determined by a range of mountains which looks on the map like a continuation of the axis of the Middle Island, which indeed it probably is. Beginning at Cape Palliser, it runs north-east as far as the south boundary of Auckland Province. The range is divided into two nearly equal parts by a cleft. North of the cleft it is called the Ruahine, and south of the cleft, down to Cape Palliser, the Tararua. Through the deep chasm that divides the ranges runs the River Manawatu, and the chasm itself is known as the Manawatu Gorge. How that cleft came to be formed, let geologists say: by some terrific convulsion, no doubt, but so long ago that Nature has had time to dress the rent with all sorts of beautiful growths. Anyone who has seen the Otira Gorge will be almost spoiled for seeing the Manawatu, which makes a humble second to its southern rival, but is well worth seeing nevertheless. As you approach from the Hawk Bay end, "a gently sloping and winding avenue leads down to the entrance of the gorge, where the river is spanned by a fine bridge, over which the road crosses to the southern side, and thence along a narrow shelf, which is cut out in the face of the mountain, and which follows with many a sharp bend and curve all the sinuosities of the river. Fifty feet below rolls the 'drumlie' stream, on the further side of which the buttresses of the hills slope sharply back, covered from the water's edge to their summits with a dense and varied vegetation—tree-ferns, nikau-palms, creepers, pines—whatever in New Zealand forest life is rich and beautiful: whilst overhead, from the narrow shelf of road, the hills ascend for many hundred feet with an ascent so steep that it strains the eyes to follow them to the top. Every here and there the sides of the gorge are seamed with deep ravines, darkened to perpetual twilight by the over-spreading green of shrubs and ferns that luxuriate in their dank recesses, down which the cool pellucid runnels tumble from the hills to mix with the yellow water of the river. Owing to the winding of the gorge, its full magnificence is not at once revealed; and there is something delightful in the feeling of expectation with which one looks for fresh revelation at each successive turn of the road. After passing several pretty cascades, that tumble down the hillside and rush through culverts underneath the road to the river, the gorge gradually widens, and presently the coach is out in the open."

The other exit from Wellington is through the Ngahauranga Gorge, along the west coast by Porirua and Otaki to Foxton, and thence either to Wanganui, or through Manawatu Gorge to Napier. The Manawatu railway now carries one over this journey in a few hours: but a short time ago the only means of locomotion was coach or horseback. And a most lovely coach-drive or ride it is. The accommodation along the road is homely enough, but, though plain, it is cleanly, and occurs at convenient distances. Road it can hardly be called, at least after leaving Paikakariki, the accommodation house opposite the island of Kapiti; for the way lies along the beach, which is here as firm as a macadamised road. The view from the hill above Paikakariki is

one of the most delightful sea-views to be had in this land of views. You stand on a cliff from which a zigzag carriage-road leads down to the sea, which lies 1,000 feet below you. Opposite are the oblong island of Kapiti and the table-like island of Mana. To the north the sandy beach, flanked by undulating sand-dunes, stretches away in an immense double curve towards Wanganui; and to the south the eye may cross Cook's Strait to where the water washes the indented shores of the Middle Island. The whole country between Wellington and Wanganui is interesting as the scene of the most skilfully organised and most vigorously executed invasion ever schemed by a savage brain. Early in this century Rauparaha, a chief of the Ngatitōa, a tribe residing on the shores of Kawhia Harbour, in the west of Auckland Province, found that his people were too closely pressed by the Waikatos and other powerful neighbours, and conceived the idea of leading his tribe south to the shores of Cook's Strait, and forcibly occupying the whole western seaboard of what has since been called Wellington Province. He accordingly set out from Kawhia with his whole tribe—men, women, and children—made war upon and defeated the various hostile tribes which he encountered, and ultimately subdued the country, establishing himself and his tribe in the island of Kapiti and the neighbouring shores. Rauparaha's was a dreaded name in its time, and even now his prowess and cruelty are remembered and spoken of in the region of his conquests. He afterwards became a most devout Christian, and patronised the missionaries, who established a mission at Otaki, where, as you enter the village, you may see two curious monuments, the one a mysterious Maori obelisk, the other a marble bust of the great warrior.



TE ARO FORESHORE (BEFORE RECLAMATION)

THE BRUMBY.

Origin—A Brumby Paradise—A "Run In"—A Stern Chase—The Trap Yard—Condemned to Death—A Recipe for Catching Wild Horses—Driving a Mob—A Sharp Burst—"Bedlam"—Victory.



A BRUMBY.

O account of Australia would be complete that did not deal with the horse in all his moods and bearings; and though truly the wild horse is more a theme for a Job or a Longfellow than for a prosaic writer, yet, mount that good-looking thoroughbred, gentle reader, and I will take you such a gallop and show you such sights as will make your blood tingle as will no other chase that I know of. But while we ride slowly through the open forest, our simple breakfast eaten, and we in the saddle before the stars are out of the sky, it would be well if I told you something concerning the wild horses of this continent, known all over it by the Australian name of "brumbies."

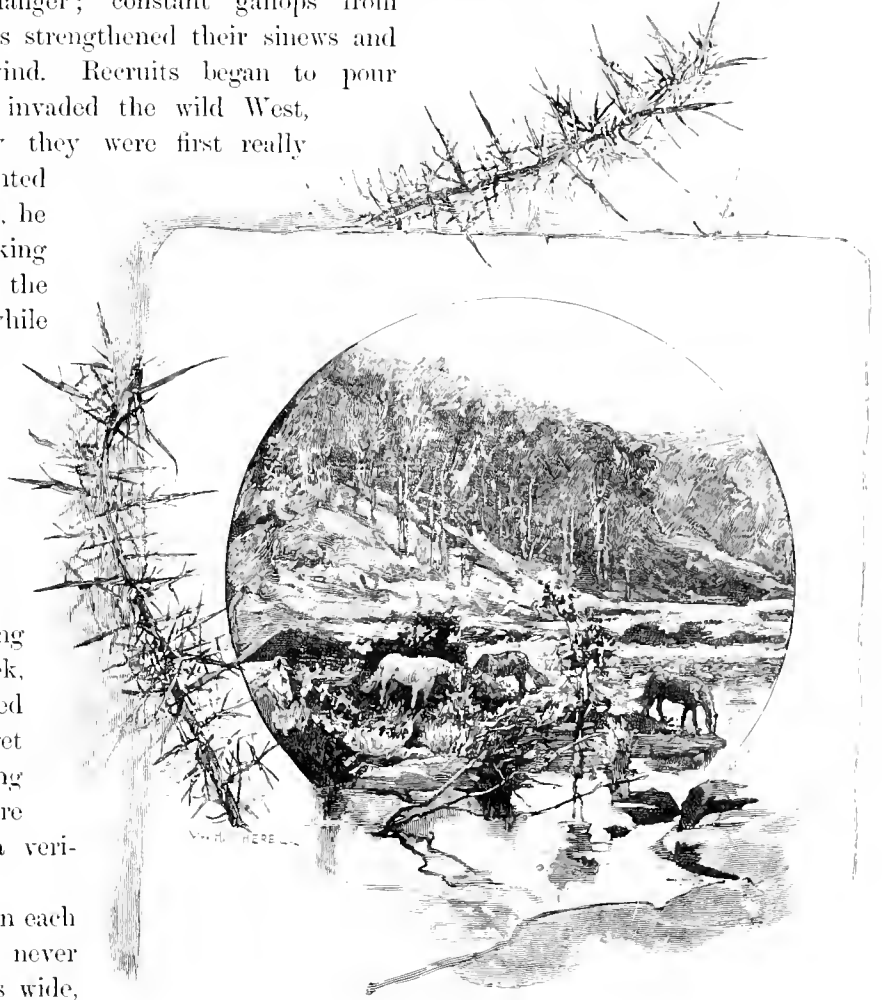
Their origin claims our first attention. It may be some twenty years or so ago that a settler lost two valuable mares. The sand-flies were bad, and, driven by them, now walking and now trotting, these mares, one followed by a noble colt foal, never touched by man's hand, and with blood in him that could tell of Epsom and the Grand National, journeyed on towards the west. Fifty miles from their owner's home is reached; but the country is rugged, and not to their taste, and on they go. Another fifty miles, and a pleasant valley affords good water and plentiful grass; but a sudden panic—caused, perhaps, by a party of blacks chasing native game—starts them afresh, and still westward they go, till finally they rest in peace far from the dwellings of men—far from the sound of clanging hobble-chain or tinkling horse-bell. Month after month rolls on. Each mare foals again, and two strangers, straying from some other part, join themselves to the little herd of five, and raise their number to seven. Then another summer begins, and four additional little foals bring up the total to eleven. The next recruits arrive with hobbles on their legs, and, could they but speak, would tell the others a strange, sad tragedy. Not thirty miles from here, while they, thus hobbled, fed quietly on the green grass within sight of their owner's camp, they had seen their master at sunrise advancing slowly, bridle and halter in hand, towards them. Then from the ground, as it were, a black stump suddenly grew into a black man: then another appeared, and another, then a short dialogue between the one white man and the fifty black devils, followed by a death-cry and the yells of many demons. Fear lent them wings, and, manacled as they were, they flew many a weary mile, till now, with a joyous neigh and the sense of safety in numbers, they throw themselves into the little group who stand shaded by the leafy

curragong. These trot round in some alarm, and snort at the jangling hobble-chain; but the older mares are soon reconciled, and the young stallion, the sire of countless future brumbies, adds these two last-comers to his increasing harem.

Such, then, was the origin of the brumbies. Daily they grew wilder and more on the alert for danger; constant gallops from imaginary enemies strengthened their sinews and improved their wind. Recruits began to pour in as civilisation invaded the wild West, and when finally they were first really determinedly hunted by the white man, he succeeded in taking but a few of the quieter ones, while those who escaped became sharper than the sharpest, wilder than the wildest, and fleetest than the fleetest, roebuck. And now we leave the open forest, and following up the winding creek, with its deep shaded water-holes, we get a sight of the grazing lands, such as are to the brumby a veritable Paradise.

A small flat on each side of the creek, never five hundred yards wide, sometimes not five, is fringed equally on either

side with a growth of open origalow and sandal-wood scrub, distributed in groups or patches, and has, as it were, a more or less wide path round each patch. In these little grooves, growing from one foot to three feet high, like gooseberry bushes, you may note varieties of salt-bush, herbs not unlike those found on sea marshes, and, like them, juicy and salt. It is the salt-bush more than the grass of this run on which the horses rely, and this it is that makes their coats so sleek; while the love of it and of the friendly scrub would make them, if removed, return hundreds of miles to their familiar home. Of this home we shall see more anon, as miles of it



A BRUMBY PARADISE.

fly by us in the chase. At present something about the methods of procuring brumbies, or "running them in," as it is called, must be said.

It is not my purpose in these few words to write an exhaustive paper on how to catch brumbies, so I shall do no more than lightly touch on the different methods. For instance, I must disarm that critic who, if I describe the brumbies to be what they are artistically, the acme of horseflesh, will straightway tell you that such a thing is impossible, and that such animals are weedy, slab-sided, mongrel brutes, food only for the rifle, and useless for any service of man. This is true of some races of them, as it is true that others are but indifferent animals; but others are useful and good. No one will maintain that in brumbies you will find stock as valuable as that of carefully-selected dams and sires; but I have seen occasional brumbies broken in of whom their owners were justly proud—noble in appearance and in manners, and hardy beyond the endurance of hunger and thirst of which the more carefully-bred horse is capable. Equally I anticipate the objection that to "run" brumbies, with a view of turning them and forcing them to enter a yard, is most difficult to do, and most impolitic to attempt, and where you do succeed, you probably ruin one or two proved and favourite horses, to find yourself at best possessed of half-a-dozen head of rubbish, with perhaps a broken head and scrub-scratched limbs. This is quite true, and I make no defence of the policy of riding down the true brumby by matching against him some fine old favourite who deserves better treatment at your hands than to be asked, as a proof of his quality, to carry twelve stone more weight than his rival, who, without an ounce on his back, flies in and out of tangling thicket and thick-set, unyielding saplings. But it must be borne in mind that what follows, so far as I can present to the reader's mind a picture of a brumby chase, is more or less true generally of the yarding of horses in the bush, from the quiet and civilised broken-in stock horses, through less quiet but still civilised orders, down to the untamed and "unyardable" scrub brumby.

Tommy, Nelson, Spot, Thunderbolt, and Darkie, for instance, all good stock horses, are known to be "on the ridges at the back of the eight mile," and after two hours' search on those ridges we find them whisking the flies off one another's faces, reposing after the manner of their kind, and affording to jaws and stomachs their needful rest. Ill disposed, at first, to vacate the pastures they have selected, they trot in small circles, and "round up," as who should say, "You don't really want us: think again: we are quite happy here, and you may rely that we will not leave this place." To this you reply, "Thunderbolt, I want you, and you, too, Tommy; get up there." Seeing, then, that you are in earnest, the mob make up their minds to other tactics, and Master Tommy suddenly becomes to all appearance a wild horse. He gives one snort of defiance, and then bounds down the hill to an accompaniment of kicks at imaginary enemies, and now, joined by his mates, the whole mob fly at their top speed, racing each other for first place, and though headed towards home, they disappear from sight over the opposing ridge. Now, rider, sit down in your saddle, and keep at least the dust of them well in sight, for cheerfully as they departed homeward bound, you have no guarantee that they will keep the line. We know Tommy of old for his

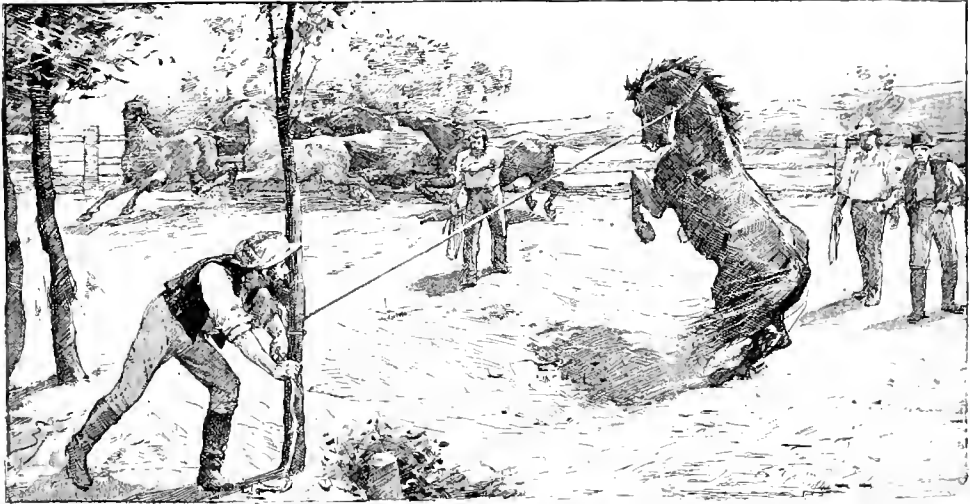
roguery, and he is as likely to wheel suddenly and dance back to "the twelve-mile lagoon," with his comrades at his heels, as he is to do anything else. See, even now he is bearing to the left, and enters, still at his top speed, that hop-wood scrub, where we follow you not, Master Tommy, but rather, bearing still more to our left, keep the open country, and leave on the right the scrub you have entered. See! ducking their heads, and now trotting in file, they emerge, thinking themselves mighty cunning, on the open sand-ridge on which we stand awaiting them. Cry, "Woa back, Tommy!" and discomfited somewhat, the whole mob stop and look up. This gives old Nelson, who is always a hundred yards behind, time to come up, and Tommy, as the ringleader, time to consider his next move. His mind made up, he, first obedient to the call, turns his steps again at a canter towards home, and soon increases the canter to a gallop, and the gallop to full speed ahead: then turns towards the left again, with the determination of making a great struggle for freedom. No use, Tommy: fast as you go, and though we are mounted on horses no fleetlier than you, handicapped as they are by our weight, while you carry none, our determination infused into our mounts, and our reason which guides them, will conquer.

Ah! you find yourself now being caught: you see me, whom you regard as your enemy, abreast of your "tail horse's" flanks; you hear my voice, which you before have heard, and have before obeyed, and your pace slackens while I draw to your head, and your head turns quickly and truly for home, and gaily you all gallop towards it, for, after all, you were but having a bit of fun with us. And you, Smuggler, old man, have carried me like you always do, like the dear old horse you are. It was a hot two miles that Tommy took us, and I would be sorry for *you* but that had I been riding Tommy you would have done exactly the same thing; and, doubtless, next time it will be Tommy's flanks that will be heaving. "Ah, stop!" Smuggler would say, "you know well enough I enjoyed the gallop as much as you did."

But we are branching off from the brumbies, and the different methods of capturing them. We will return at once from a digression which, however, may not be quite without excuse, since it suggests that if the yarding of half-a-dozen quiet stock horses is not to be accomplished without some little horsemanship and judgment, the capture of the freeborn children of the scrub, wilder than the antelope in their habits, cannot be an easy task to either man or horse.

The "trap-yard" method is one of the most successful means of dealing with brumbies. It can, however, only be used, as a rule, when a dry season has made water scarce, and driven mobs of brumbies to water at the same water-hole. This is then fenced in by a big yard, while the "pad" down which the horses have been in the habit of coming is left undisturbed, and a wide space of yard, easily adjusted at any time in a few minutes with slip rails, is left incomplete. Suspicious as the brumby may be that there is something wrong about these horizontal saplings, thirst compels him shortly to seek his favourite pool. Look! while he is yet drinking, while his wives and children are churning up the water with their fore feet, rolling in it, and playfully biting at one another, there is a sound behind them, and the gap at which they entered is a gap no longer, but is filled by several horizontal rails,

The "Aged Sire," the leader and controller of the mob, is, by drumhead court-martial, condemned to death, and a rifle bullet through the brain sends him to the happy hunting-grounds of horse-land. Three times again the rifle speaks, and three fine old mares are sent to keep their consort company. These, too, are known to be too old for reform. Alas! the three young foals are left orphans, and piteous it is to



BREAKING IN.

see them inquisitively sorrowful, bending over their prostrate dams, conscious of some great calamity, but ignorant as to what they have done to deserve it. Three yearlings, no doubt their elders by a year, sorrowing sisters, share their loss, and give the little ones what comfort they can by bending over them, breathing on them, and coaxing them to the far side of the yard, away from the cruel men. Two older mares, guessed as four-year-olds, stand determinedly apart, their minds made up for a rush for liberty whenever the hateful slip-rails shall be let down. A staunch draft-horse removes the bodies of the dead, and we see them no more. And now preparations are made, and the first steps taken, to bend the survivors to our will.

Out flies through the air the long head-rope, and now the noose, drawn tight, holds the neck of the older mare. Quickly the end is turned round a sapling, and fiercely fights the victim against a power to which her strength is as nothing. Soon the fight is over, and, choked and exhausted, she falls on her side. The rope is slacked, but two men, not without some risk, are, to the looker-on, apparently *amongst* the convulsively kicking legs. Long training and habit teaches them, however, how to use their force

and where to dispose of themselves in such a way that they shall run the least risk; and soon one has her firmly by the head, kneeling on her neck, with the nose turned up to the sky, while the other, having quickly passed the tail between the legs, his knees on her quarter, prevents her from getting her legs under her to rise, as she otherwise would. A third man now ties her down with ropes, and she is left firmly bound while the others undergo the same process.

Let me not be supposed to be advocating cruelty when I mention that it has been found an effectual way of cowing untamed brumbies to tie their ears down beneath their chins, the theory being that a horse cannot gallop quickly unless he has his ears in a certain position—that is, in the usual position adopted by a galloping horse. Whatever the cause of it, there is no doubt of the efficacy of the recipe. But this is not a book of directions for catching wild horses. No! the art—if art it may be called—must be learned in a rougher school—the school of experience. The axe must circle round your head many hundred times; the scrub must tear your clothes, and your body too; your throat must be often dried up, to be relieved by no pure draughts of water; you must suffer hunger and wet, cold and heat, in pursuit of the brumby, before you learn how to conquer him, and tame him to your will.

I once had sent to me a “recipe for catching wild horses.” It was sent, in a perfectly friendly and genuine way, by a man not long arrived in the country from my own county of Blankshire, and I was asked to return the original document, which bore on its surface the marks of great age, as of a hidden treasure, the folds being worn, and the paper discoloured, and the colour of the ink much faded. This precious document read as follows:—

“Blankshire.—Recipe for Catching Wild Horses.—Take two pounds of flour and six ounces of powdered ginger, and half a pint of treacle; knead them in the usual way, and bake them; then sweat them well under the arm-pits, then go into the field where the wild horse is, get to windward of him, and hold the cakes in each hand. Advance towards him, and he will advance towards you, and will eat the cakes, during which operation you will have no difficulty in catching him.”

The experiences of one who has followed the simplest method of getting rid of brumbies are deeply interesting, though to a lover of horses undoubtedly painful, and I shall not here do more than allude to the use of the rifle in the open bush. The relentless exterminator of brumbies must creep warily on his prey, and often, when possessed of the necessary experience as to which animal to select first from the herd before him, he will not leave his ambush till horse after horse has gone down beneath his pitiless weapon. There are men who might count by the thousand the brumbies they have thus shot.

But here we are on the spot where many years ago I first “ran” a mob of brumbies. We had been for some years settled on the run before we discovered that this creek—which at its junction with the main creek appears an insignificant tributary—opened, if you followed it high up, into the very excellent pasture of grass and salt-bush which we now see before us. Fresh cattle-tracks one day led me up here, and I not only got the cattle, but had my first view of eight or ten head of brumbies,

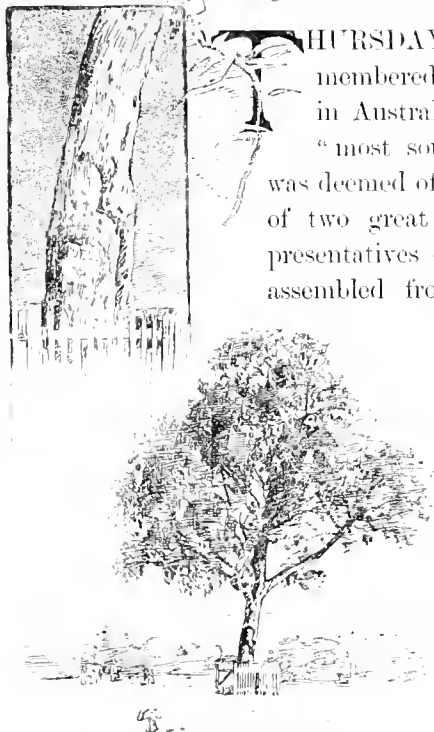
my wrenched-off legging. No one cares. If one of us fell dead, I don't think anyone would stop. No need to spur the horses, they are madder than we, and, if possible, more eager to make captives of the brumbies. They are gone: the black boy has their tracks, however, plain to him as any main road, as he flies along them, without reducing speed; and when two miles more are covered, he gives a look round with joyful smile on his ugly, sweating face, and "There they are!" is passed down our short line; and if it was madness before, it is pure "Bedlam" now. Not to lose them again, spurs are given to our already maddened horses, and on we go: the black boy's woolly and bullet head (and a better rider never sat a horse) goes swaying to and fro and bobbing up and down, dodging the limbs and saplings which threaten every moment to brain him or one of us, and again we gain on the brumbies; once more we are alongside; once more well in the lead; once more the too dense scrub, which flesh and blood could not get through at *that* pace, throws us out, and we run on sight or dust only. But what is this? The scrub is growing thinner, and out into light timber together rush the pursuer and pursued. "Now for it! Wheel them, Toby!" Ah! What is this? We creep up over the heavy flat; we are left behind; the spurs dug deep bring no answering rally; they beat us for pace, and enter the opposite scrub before us. They can beat us for pace, but can they for bottom? "Ease your horse off a bit, Toby, and trot on the tracks." For ten miles has the pace been fast and furious, sometimes full speed, never less than a hard gallop. Our course has been to the west, to the south, and now, see, they are trending to the east. The horses have got their wind again, and from a trot we go on the tracks to a gallop. Toby makes no mistakes, but keeps the new tracks, not three minutes old, and never confuses them with those of the day before; and again the joyful look on the grinning face, "There they are!" and, as we look at them, all covered with foam, with heads dejected, and widespread nostrils, it seems they must surely be ours at last. We gain on them slowly. A foal from the brumbies pulls up short, with a plaintive neigh, and says, "I can go no further." Toby grins double, and passes to me the word, "Do you see the foal knock up?" He looks upon this as the beginning of the end. And now they are trotting, and west is the course, and soon they come out on the very spot from which we ourselves started them that morning, and along which two hours ago they were bounding in uncontrolled freedom.

Now, good horses, press forward, and take them home. And right nobly, after such a twenty-mile gallop, do our horses answer the call. Your side a little, now mine, must be turned: no great pace in any of the movements either of the victors or the vanquished, but of the movements ours are the quickest. "Horses ahead!" says Toby. "Hurrah! a grand little mob of station horses, Crinoline and Beauty, and their foals, and others: shoot them into them. They are ours now, for with such a lead as Beauty will give them, they will go straight to the yard."

We ate our lunches at the head station that day, and neither we, nor, it may be, our horses, have forgotten that run after brumbies.

MELBOURNE TO SYDNEY BY RAIL.

The Finishing Touch—Then and Now—The Future—The Melbourne Terminus—Kilmore—The Goulburn—Glenrowan and the Kellys—Albury—Daniel Morgan—Wagga Wagga—Thomas Castro—A Terrible Accident—The Kiandra Caves—Yass—Lakes George and Bathurst—Moss Vale—Picton—Moore College—The Other End.



HOVELL'S TREE, ALBURY.

THURSDAY, the 14th of June, 1883, is a day to be remembered in the history of intercolonial railway communication in Australia. On that day there was celebrated at Albury, the "most southern town" of New South Wales, an event which was deemed of sufficient importance to bring together the Governors of two great colonies, and with them upwards of a thousand representatives of Australian life and Australian interests. They had assembled from considerable distances to mark the general sense of the exceptional interest and importance which attached to the completion of a great enterprise. That enterprise was the union of Melbourne with Sydney by a continuous railroad. For many years the work had been in progress; it was now at length happily accomplished. In New South Wales the first few miles of railway were opened in the year 1855; in Victoria the first few miles were opened in 1856. Thenceforward one extension after another was completed and opened, until in 1881 the gap between the two railway systems was reduced to a distance of some three miles. By that interval the respective border towns of Albury and Wodonga are separated; and through

that interval there flows the great River Hume or Murray. It was resolved that the river should be bridged, and that the two railway systems should thus be brought into actual contact. And now this finishing touch, so to speak, had been put to the work: the trains ran through from one side of the river to the other; and at Albury the peoples of Victoria and New South Wales had assembled by their representatives to rejoice over the realisation of a project towards the accomplishment of which they had been working for upwards of thirty years.

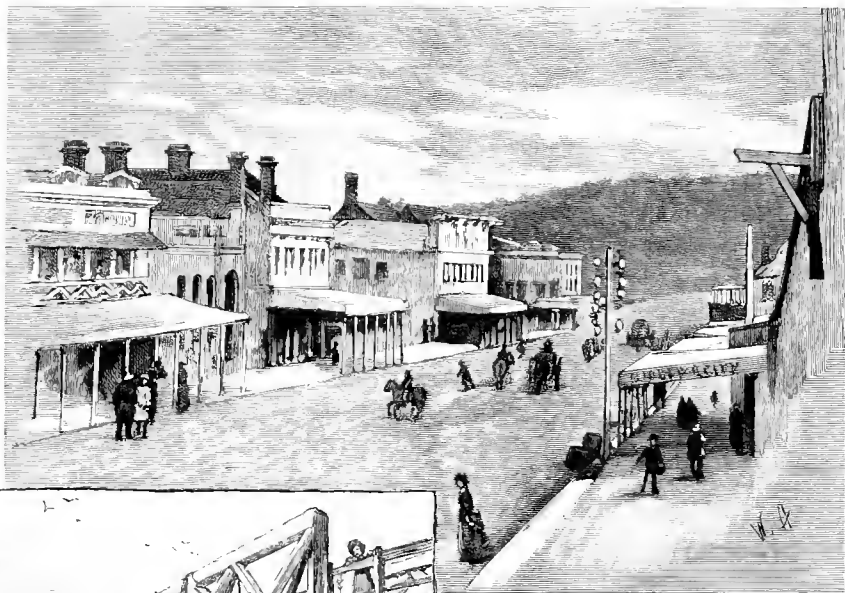
With the completion of the railway between Sydney and Melbourne it became practicable to run express trains regularly between the two capitals, accomplishing the distance in less than nineteen hours. Only thirty years earlier a traveller from Sydney to Melbourne on special business thought himself "extremely lucky" when, by dint of pushing on night and day, almost without intermission, he succeeded in reaching his journey's end within the week. Doubtless, before very long, it will be found possible still further to abridge the time of transit. A few miles will be cut off by means of

a more direct line between Sydney and Liverpool. Arrangements such as those which exist in other countries will, perhaps, be adopted, so as to lessen the present delay for meals. And a further saving of time will be effected so soon as the growth of traffic shall have justified and demanded the duplication of the line. At present, for by far the larger portion of the way there is but a single set of rails, and the safe conduct of the traffic makes it necessary to work the line on the "staff and ticket" system. Thus, at every few miles, the speed of the train must be sufficiently reduced to enable the driver as he passes to exchange his staff or ticket with the station-master.

But, after all, it was much more than a mere sense of satisfaction at the attainment of easier and quicker means of transit for passengers or bales of wool that lay at the bottom of the great demonstration on the occasion of the union of the two railway systems. The true significance of the event was felt to lie in its prophecy of the union of the colonies. "We venture to express the hope," said the Mayor and Aldermen of the Borough of Albury, in addressing the Governor of New South Wales, "that the connection of the two trunk lines of New South Wales and Victoria will greatly facilitate the large and important traffic between Sydney and Melbourne, and we trust that it may be only the forerunner of the repeal of border duties and the federation of the Australian colonies." "I feel confident," said Lord Augustus Loftus, in reply, "that with the increase of railway communication, the necessity of intercolonial free trade will become daily more apparent, and that the force of circumstances arising therefrom will at no distant date prove the indispensable necessity of abolishing all obstructions to trade, and of establishing an intimate union among all the Australian colonies, for their mutual welfare and common good." On the other side of the border the same feeling prevailed. In addressing the Governor of Victoria, the President and Councillors of the Shire of Wodonga expressed their conviction that this event would be "but the first step towards welding the Australian colonies as one great nation, and is the augur which foretells how quickly the dawn of federation is approaching, and how essential it is for each colony that the bonds of unity in commerce and legislation should be more firmly bound." And the Marquis of Normanby replied:—"I am inclined to believe with you that before long this will be the first step towards the union of the colonies. I heartily wish that it may be the case." Again and again in the speeches at the banquet the same thought was expressed. There had been a time when there existed but one Australian colony. Then had come—no doubt inevitably—the era of separation. But when separation had done its proper work, the great thing to look forward to was the reunion of the several independent colonies for the furtherance of their great common interests. This the first union of capitals by rail would shortly be followed by the similar union of Adelaide with Melbourne, and of Brisbane with Sydney. And the true inner significance of the railway union was held to be that it "prefigured a more abiding union," when the difficulties which at present operated to keep the colonies apart should "melt like the snow on the Australian Alps, and be carried away as the Murray carries the snow to the ocean."

The Spencer Street Terminus in Melbourne, from which the traveller for Sydney starts on his journey of 576 miles, can scarcely fail to strike everyone as being below

the standard which befits the principal railway station of a great and prosperous colony. Doubtless, however, it should be regarded as an outgrowth and now merely provisional structure, destined to be replaced by one better adapted to the requirements of a greatly extended traffic, as well as more dignified in appearance. Leaving Spencer Street, the line at first passes through suburbs and country which can scarcely be pronounced attractive. By degrees the outlook improves. The country becomes undulating; the paddocks are well grassed, and sometimes studded with park-like trees; and there are distant views to be obtained of picturesque ranges of hills, one behind another. The signs of busy rural life



DEAN STREET, ALBURY.



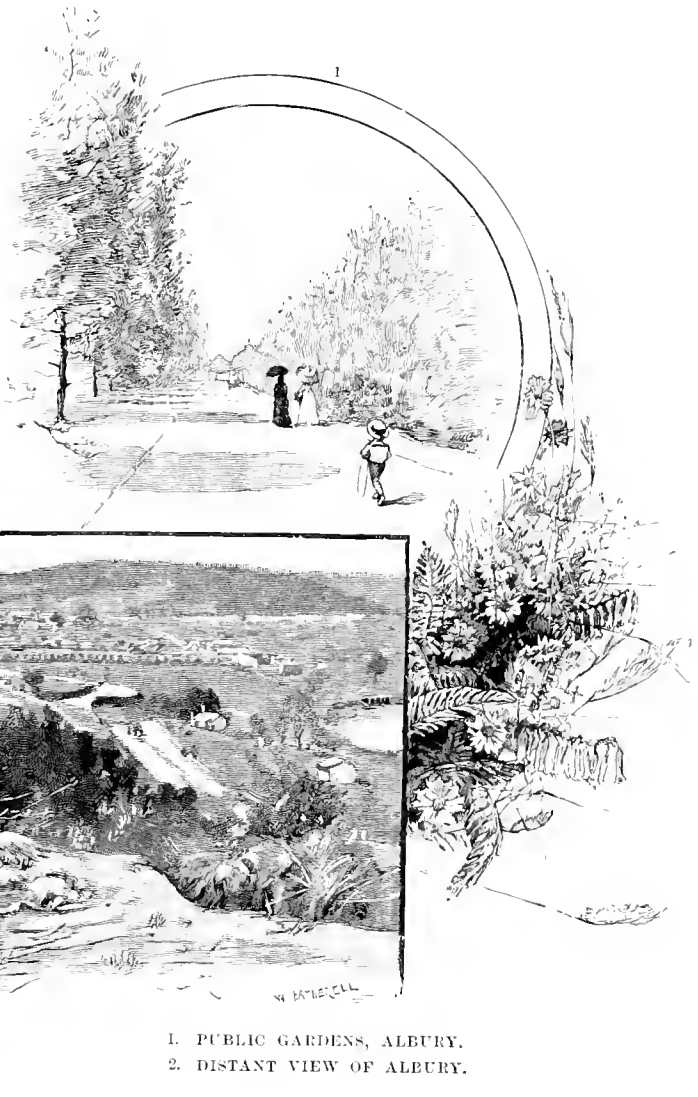
BRIDGE OVER THE MURRAY AT ALBURY.

are plentiful: tidy homesteads, teams of working bullocks, cattle and sheep and horses grazing. Where the ground is rocky, the loose stones have been removed and judiciously utilised in the construction of neat and permanent fireproof fences. Elsewhere the fences

are often made in a homely sort of way of logs and boughs laid longitudinally and rudely intertwined with one another. Viewed on a bright afternoon, with the landscape strongly illuminated by the westering sun, and its brightness here and there relieved by contrast with patches of shade thrown by overhanging masses of cumulus cloud, the scene is varied and pleasing.

Before long, however, it will become somewhat less attractive. The country will show fewer signs of occupation; and the well-known and characteristic air of somewhat tame monotony will reassert itself in the ubiquitous and familiar

"bush." That, however, is not the fate immediately before our traveller from Melbourne. He is just now approaching the Great Dividing Range, which, at an average distance of some sixty or seventy miles from the coast, runs right across Victoria, from east to west. The peaks of this range are from one to seven thousand feet in height. At its eastern extremity it is terminated (so far as Victoria is concerned) by the Australian Alps; at its western by the Grampians. This range forms, of course, an important geographical feature, dividing as it does the rivers which run northward and westward into the great Murray system from those which run eastwards and southwards into the sea. In crossing this range the line passes within a short distance of the town of Kilmore, situated at a height of about 900 feet



1. PUBLIC GARDENS, ALBURY.
2. DISTANT VIEW OF ALBURY.

above the sea, and surrounded by a fertile soil of volcanic origin. The story goes that when Sir Charles Gavan Duffy was Premier of Victoria, it was proposed to change the name of Kilmore into Gavan Duffy Town. The inhabitants, however, did not take kindly to the suggested innovation; whereupon a wag came forward and proposed, by way of a reasonable compromise for the difficulty, that the name of Kilduffy might be adopted. Beyond Kilmore the level gradually sinks, and after seventeen miles

Tallarook is reached, at a height of 585 feet above the sea. From Tallarook there is a branch line to Yea, a distance of thirty miles. Among the ranges in the neighbourhood of Tallarook very pretty views may be obtained. Five miles further on is Seymour, one of the principal refreshment stations on the line, provided with ample accommodation for a large number of diners. The town of Seymour is prettily situated on the River Goulburn, which gives good opportunities for the enjoyment of boating and fishing.

The Goulburn is one of the rivers which were discovered and named in the course of the Hume-Hovell expedition. It rises on the Great Dividing Range, and runs into the Murray a little above Echuca. Seymour may be considered as dividing the upper from the lower Goulburn. Hitherto the course of the river has been westerly, but at this point it turns abruptly northwards. A few miles beyond Seymour is Mangalore Junction. This place, which is said to have been named after the Indian Mangalore by a settler from India, was of little or no importance prior to the construction of the Goulburn Valley Railway, which branches off from the main line at this point. The Goulburn Valley line, on which there is a notable cutting known as Saddle Cutting, at Bargo Brush, through which the branch line runs through what is naturally a splendid agricultural country; but, like so much of the best agricultural land in the colonies, it has suffered from unscientific methods of cultivation. Favoured by its central position as regards this district, the town of Shepparton is one of rising importance.

Following the course of the main line beyond Seymour, the traveller will see, away to the eastward, the district in which lie the Strathbogie Ranges, where the notorious Kelly gang of bushrangers so long found shelter, and contrived to evade all efforts for their capture. The doings of that celebrated gang of desperadoes will be here only very briefly referred to, so far as their story brings them into close connection with the railway line. Euroa, a station twenty-two miles beyond Seymour, was the scene of one of the sensational bank robberies perpetrated by the gang.

Passing Benalla, the centre of an important agricultural and pastoral district, and the junction of a branch line to Yarrawonga, the next station is Glenrowan, a place still more famous than Euroa, since it is the scene of the destruction of the gang. It was near this spot that the special train, despatched from Melbourne late on Sunday evening, 27th June, 1880, with the constables and black trackers on board, was stopped by the Glenrowan schoolmaster, Mr. Curnow, by means of a red pocket handkerchief with a lighted match behind it, just in time to save it from being wrecked at a point about a mile and a half further on, where, at a curve and on a falling gradient, the line had been cut for that purpose by the Kellys. The gang, or at least three out of four of them, were then in the Glenrowan Inn, a wooden structure standing at a short distance from the railway station. Instead of the expected crash of the wrecked train, they found themselves suddenly surrounded and attacked by the police. The fight lasted from about three o'clock on Sunday night until the inn was set on fire at three o'clock on Monday afternoon. Its strangest episode took place just after day-break, and is thus graphically described by a writer in *The Australasian*, who was an

eye-witness of the scene :—" And now occurred the most sensational event of the day. We were watching the attack from the rear of the station at the west end, when suddenly we noticed one or two of the men on the extreme right, with their backs turned to the hotel, firing at something in the bush. Presently we noticed a very tall figure in white stalking slowly along in the direction of the hotel. There was no head visible, and in the dim light of the morning, with the steam rising from the ground, it looked for all the world like the ghost of Hamlet's father with no head, only a very long, thick neck. Those who were standing with me did not see it for some time, and I was too intent on watching its movements to point it out to others. The figure continued gradually to advance, stopping every now and then, and moving what looked like its headless neck slowly and mechanically round, and then raising one foot on to a log, and aiming and firing a revolver. Shot after shot was fired at it, but without effect, the figure generally replying by tapping the butt end of its revolver against its neck, the blows ringing out with the clearness and distinctness of a bell in the morning air. It was the most extraordinary sight I ever saw or read of in my life, and I felt fairly spell-bound with wonder, and I could not stir or speak. Presently the figure moved towards a dip in the ground near to some white dead timber, and, more men coming up, the firing got warmer. Still the figure kept erect, tapping its neck and using its weapon on its assailants. At this moment I noticed a man in a small round tweed hat stealing up on the left of the figure, and when within about thirty paces of it firing low two shots in quick succession. The figure staggered and reeled like a drunken man, and in a few moments afterwards fell near the dead timber. The spell was then broken, and we all rushed forward to see who and what our ghostly antagonist was. Quicker than I can write it, we were upon him; the iron mask was torn off, and there in the broad light of day, were the features of the veritable bloodthirsty Ned Kelly himself."

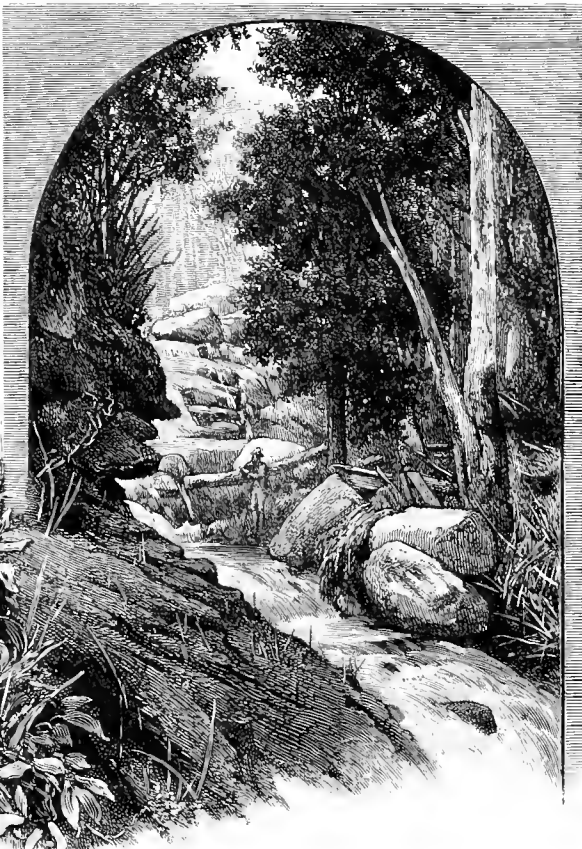
Ten miles beyond the historically celebrated Glenrowan is the more intrinsically important town of Wangaratta. Wangaratta is situated at the junction of the Ovens and King Rivers. From Wangaratta there is a branch line to Beechworth. The country round is well suited for agriculture and fruit-growing. The next station is Springs, situated in a fertile district of volcanic origin; here there is a branch line to Wahgunyah, the principal town of the Rutherglen shire. In about three-quarters of an hour, after leaving Springs, Wodonga, the border township of Victoria in this direction, is reached, and a few minutes later the passengers are transferred to the New South Wales railway system at Albury, having now completed the first—and, it may be added, by far the dustiest—section of their journey.

The physical transference from the train of one colony to that of the other is made as easy as may be by the arrangements of the fine station at Albury, which includes an excellent dining-room. Of the transition in other respects, Mr. J. A. Fronde gives his impressions thus in "*Oceana*":—" We were now in another province, among other men, other principles, and other political theories. Victoria is democratic, progressive, and eager for colonial federation. New South Wales has the same form of government; is progressive, too, in its more deliberate manner; but it is Conservative,

old-fashioned, in favour of Imperial federation, and opposed to Colonial federation, which it fears, as likely to lead—little as the Victorians mean it—to eventual separation and independence. There are differences of tariff, too, and a certain rivalry between the two colonies. Now South Wales is the elder brother, and expects a deference which it does not always meet with."

The town of Albury may be said to date back to November 17th, 1824, when the party of Hume and Hovell were camped on or near its site, under a tree that is still standing and is fenced in, and were exercising all their ingenuity upon the solution of the difficult problem of crossing the wide, deep, and strong river which flowed between them and what is now the territory of Victoria. At no great distance from the point at which that earliest crossing was made, the river is now spanned by a stout wooden bridge, appropriately named the "Union Bridge," over which passes the road to Wodonga. When the railway was first carried across the river, the rails were laid on a temporary wooden bridge, the permanent iron bridge not being ready for use until October, 1884. The town itself is pleasingly situated, having in its neighbourhood many rounded and picturesque hills, the nearer ones covered in part with vineyards, and the more distant ones with primeval forest. The vine

flourishes splendidly in the Murray valley; and there are a number of celebrated vineyards in the immediate neighbourhood of Albury. Orchards, too, are plentiful; and among other produce of the district, tobacco may be mentioned. Enough gold is found among the hills to maintain a limited number of miners. For recreation, the people of Albury are now provided with a public park or botanic gardens, a pleasant feature which is happily characteristic of the larger Australian towns generally. Politically, it is possible that in the future Albury may hold a distinguished position, as the Washington of Australia. When the time comes for the colonies to federate, it will be necessary to find a suitable place for the head-quarters of the central government. And in anticipation of such a necessity, the claims of Albury for this honour have

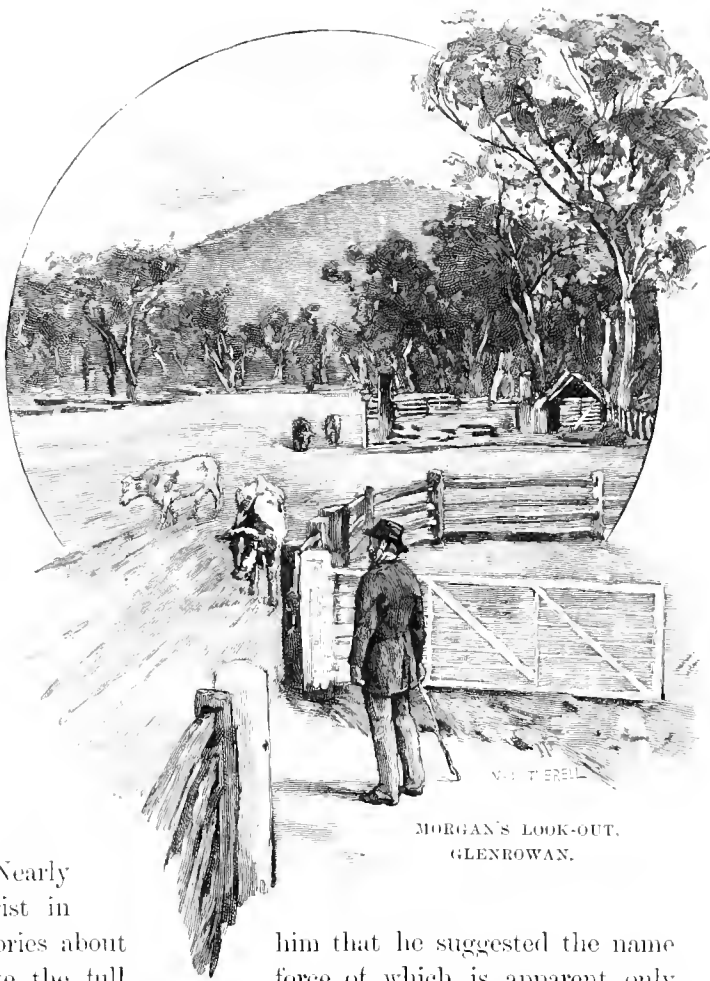


ON THE TALLAROOK RANGES.

been felt to be so strong that the town has already been prophetically dubbed the "Federal City."

Eighteen miles on the Sydney side of Albury is Gerogery, a place which was for some time the terminus of the New South Wales line, prior to the opening of the last extension into Albury. Near Gerogery is a remarkable mountain ridge called the Table-top. The neighbouring district was at one time terrorised by a notorious bushranger named Morgan, who, however, was at length brought to justice, like Ned Kelly more recently. Morgan's look-out and cave may be seen near the Gerogery Station. His cool audacity exercised a great influence upon the minds of all the dwellers in the district round Albury. Nearly a decade after his death, a tourist in Eastern Riverina heard so many stories about Morgenland for the district, a joke the full to those acquainted with German. Daniel Morgan had something of the Robin Hood about him. He liked to pose as the friend of the poor, and it is boldly asserted that whilst the authorities were searching for him, many of the selectors were ready to hide him or give him information as to the movements of the police. This friend of the poor would "stick up" a Chinese hawker and distribute his goods; but the friend of the selector was the enemy of the squatter, and many of the man's worst atrocities were committed against station-holders. At one station he made the squatter's nephew hold out his hand as a target for his pistol, and unerringly riddled it; at another he made the squatter's wife play the piano to him. He made a raid into Victoria, and "stuck up" one of two stations about a quarter of a mile apart. A servant-maid ran over to the other; the police were summoned; an ambush was prepared, and as Morgan was going away in the morning he was shot dead.

About sixty miles further on the prosperous and rising town of Wagga Wagga is reached, situated on the southern bank of the important River Murrumbidgee. The uninitiated would naturally pronounce the name of this town as if it rhymed with



MORGAN'S LOOK-OUT,
GLENROWAN.

swagger, but it is usually pronounced as if the first syllable rhymed with dog, Wogga Wogga. The name being said to have come from the natives' imitation of the cry of the wild crow, another pronunciation seems more correct, viz., Warga, Warga. Wagga Wagga, or, as it now generally called, simply Wagga, stands at the head of the navigation of the Murrumbidgee, which for the distance of fully five hundred miles from this point to its junction with the Murray, near Balranald, is usually practicable for the river steamers engaged in the Murray trade. The Murrumbidgee is said to be about thirteen hundred miles in length, and to drain an area of twenty-five thousand square miles. The story of the tracing of the Murrumbidgee down to the Murray, and of the Murray down to its disappointing outlet at Lake Alexandrina, in South Australia, forms one of the stirring incidents of Australian exploration. Captain Sturt was in charge of the expedition which, in 1859, accomplished this feat. Finding it practically impossible to follow the windings of the river on land, Sturt sent back his drays, and continued the hazardous quest with half-a-dozen men in a boat. The party ran great risks from hostile demonstrations on the part of the natives; and on the return journey they became at last utterly exhausted with the continuous labour of rowing so great a distance against the current. Help came just in time. "Exactly six months after leaving," says the Rev. J. E. Tenison Woods, "they were all safe back again in Sydney. A triumph, of course, awaited them there; and the story is still told as one of the glories of Australia how six men ventured some thousands of miles, through a country infested by hostile savages, with no other conveyance than an open whaleboat."

The name of Wagga Wagga acquired extensive notoriety in England some years ago as the place in which "Thomas Castro, *alias* Arthur Orton, *alias* Sir Roger Doughty Tichborne, Bart.," had carried on his business as a butcher, before coming forward to assert his claim to the Tichborne estates. The butcher's shop occupied by Thomas Castro has since been pulled down, and on its site there now stands one of a good row of shops known as the "Tichborne Buildings." Wagga Wagga, it should be added, will be the junction of a branch line to be constructed to Tumbarumba. On leaving the station by the main line, the Murrumbidgee is crossed by a viaduct, to which reference has been made in a former article.*

The next station of importance is Junee, at the junction of the main Southern with the South-Western line. The object of the latter line is to open up and connect with Sydney the rich pastoral district known as the Riverina. Prior to the construction of this line, the Riverina trade had gone chiefly to Melbourne. The present terminus of the South-Western line is at Hay, a town which, like Wagga Wagga, is situated on the Murrumbidgee. The railway follows the northern bank of the river. At Narrandera, distant from Junee rather more than one-third of the entire length of the line, is the junction of another branch line, whose present terminus is at Jerilderie. Jerilderie has a point in common with Euroa on the Victorian line, inasmuch as it, too, was the scene of a bank robbery by the Kelly gang. From Junee to Hay the distance is 167 miles; from Narrandera to Jerilderie, 65 miles. At Junee Junction there are good station buildings, including elaborate refreshment-rooms

* *Vide* p. 158.

Thirty-four miles from Junee the train reaches another junction. This is Cootamundra, whence there is a line now open as far as Gundagai, on the Murrumbidgee, a distance of thirty-three miles. This line will doubtless be extended before long to Tumut, and will tap a very fertile country.

It was at a point about three-and-a-half miles on the southern or Albury side of Cootamundra that a terrible accident happened to the train from Melbourne on the evening of Sunday, 25th January, 1885. After a tremendous and long-continued down-pour of rain, the railway embankment was washed away in three places. Notice was given at the station that a "wash away" had taken place, but unfortunately the telegraph line had been wrecked, and it was therefore impossible to warn a station lower down the line. Steps were taken to protect the approaching train from the danger of falling into the gap now known to exist at a spot about a mile from Cootamundra. But those engaged in the work knew nothing of two other gaps which had been made in the line two and two-and-a-half miles further south. The southernmost of these was at a culvert crossing the Salt Clay Creek, where a breach had been made in the embankment about fifty yards wide, through which the water was pouring some eight or nine feet deep. The rails hung over the chasm, held together by the fish-plates. On came the train down a steep gradient, in the thickening gloom and pelting rain. At the last moment the driver became aware of the ruin before him. The air-break was put on, but it was too late. The engine nearly reached the Cootamundra side of the gap, and the rest of the train dammed the swirling creek. Happily, the roof of the sleeping-car was broken off by the next carriage, and thus its occupants were assisted in making their way out; but the conductor of the sleeping-car and several others were killed, and many who escaped drowning were seriously hurt. As soon as practicable the wounded were conveyed to Goulburn, where the coroner's inquest was held. The jury brought in a verdict which threw the blame and responsibility upon the railway authorities. Subsequently, however, when a test action for damages was brought in the Supreme Court by one of the sufferers, the railway department succeeded in reversing the verdict of the coroner's jury, by showing that all reasonable care had been taken to protect the line against flood-waters, and that the recent downfall had been something quite unprecedented. Guided by this painful experience the authorities, of course, at once took extra precautions, in order to guard against the possible recurrence of a disaster which is perhaps the most appalling on the list—happily not a long one—of railway accidents in Australia.

It was of this accident that, in "Oceana," Mr. Fronde strikingly tells a story, for which, however, we cannot vouch. "I read in a newspaper," he writes, "that the pointsman on the bridge had seen the earth giving way, and had seen the lights of the approaching engine. His own cottage, with his wife and children sleeping in it, stood in a situation where it would certainly be overwhelmed, and instant warning could alone save the lives of his family. If he advanced along the rail to stop the engine the cottage would be lost with all in it. The choice was hard, and nature proved the strongest. The wife and children were saved, the train fell into the boiling abyss."

Mention has been made of Tumut as a place likely to be united by rail with

Gundagai, and thus with Cootamundra and the main line. About forty miles to the south of Tumut and twelve to the north of Kiandra are some very remarkable limestone caves, called the Yarrangobilly Caves, which promise, when properly opened up, to possess attractions similar to those of the famous Jenolan, or so-called "Fish

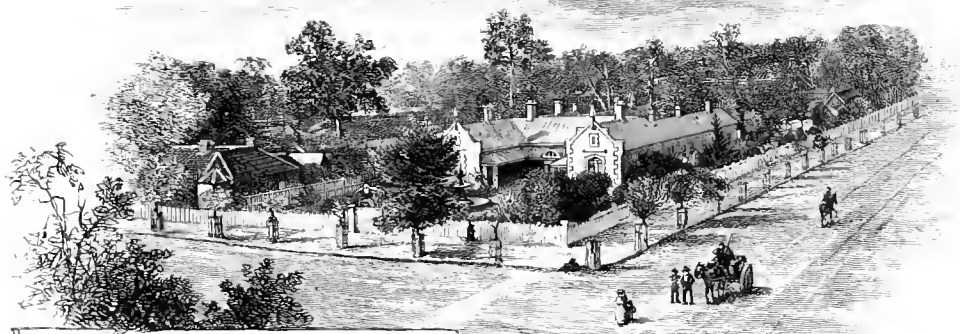


THE KIANDRA CAVES.

River" Caves. The following extracts are from a report upon these caves made by Mr. Anderson (who was sent by Mr. Wilkinson, the Government geologist, to inspect them), and published in 1887 :—

"There are two principal routes to the caves, one by Gundagai and Tumut, and the other by Queanbeyan, Cooma, and Kiandra. By the former route the coach runs as

far as Tumut, and from this point to the foot of Mount Talbingo the distance is about twenty miles, and there is a fairly good buggy road, although some parts of it are a little rough. It is extremely difficult to take a buggy up Mount Talbingo, the ascent being 2,080 feet within a distance of three miles, and the present track up is very bad: but this difficulty having been surmounted, there is a passable bush track to Mr. Gibbs' station, within eight miles of the caves. This last eight miles can only be performed on horseback or on foot, and in wet weather many of the sidings are very dangerous. This



WAGGA WAGGA.

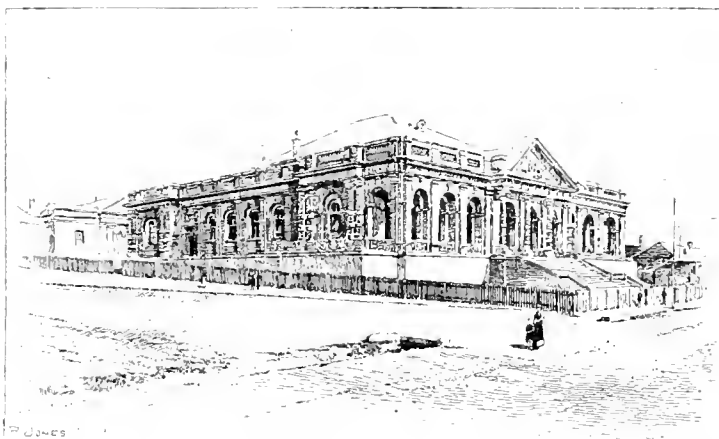
1. Castro's Shop. 2. The Hospital. 3. Castro's Hut.

route from Tumut passes through very mountainous and picturesque country, and some of the views obtained from points of vantage, such as the top of Mount Talbingo, are very

fine; while in striking Yarrangobilly Creek a splendid view is obtained of the limestone cliffs, and the great arch which forms the entrance to the two principal caves. The second route is by Queanbeyan, Cooma, and Kiandra, all of which are connected by coach. For eight miles from Kiandra there is a buggy road across Kiandra plains, but from here a bridle track has to be followed, which goes to a selection within half-a-mile of the caves. At various points on this route glimpses can be got of the snowy ranges, which even within a fortnight of midsummer were dotted over with patches of snow. By the former route visitors could drive to the foot of Mount Talbingo, within twenty miles of the caves: while by the latter route they could drive to within four or five miles. The entrance to what are called the

'Glory Hole' caves is lofty, and of considerable width. It is cleared, and visitors usually camp there, and remain over-night at the caves."

In regard to the left-hand caves, Mr. Anderson says:—"From the roof hang pink and green tinged stalactites, exhibiting very irregular forms, and in the inequalities of which nestle tufts of maiden-hair ferns, which produce a very pretty effect. For about forty yards in from the mouth of the cave the passage is nearly



THE COURT-HOUSE, YASS.

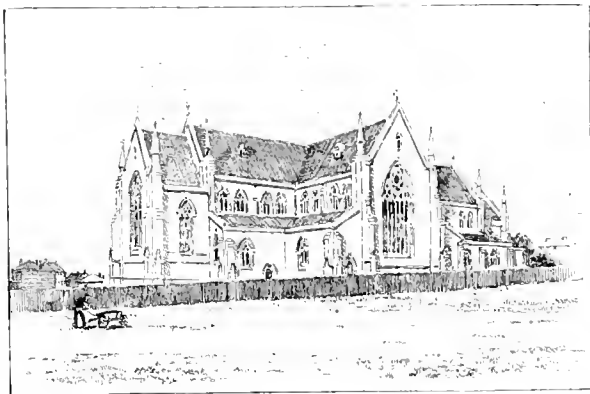
forty feet high by thirty feet wide. At this point it widens out into a large chamber, the sides of which are thickly-coated masses of carbonate of lime, which assume very varied forms, while from the roof hang numberless yellow-tinged, stalactites. On the floor are three large masses, which have no doubt fallen from the roof, and become coated over with stalagmite growth from the water

dripping upon them. At the far end of this chamber there are remains of masses of stalactites which must at one time have had the appearance of a frozen waterfall. It can be seen coming from the hill near the roof, and its lower end must have hung there probably in a series of points, but now it has been partly destroyed by being broken across, and the lower part carried away. This chamber is about sixty yards in length, and when it begins to narrow, it forms a gradually contracting gallery, in the centre of which stands an isolated pillar of stalagmite, eight feet in height, which, however, is much disfigured by the pencilling of names on its surface. To the right of the pillar stands a large group of stalagmites, which at the floor form a single mass. As they rise, each one gradually tapers out of the mass until only a single central stalagmite reaches the roof. The sides of the chamber are thickly coated with stalactites, which in many places form pillars which stand out a little distance from the wall. The roof is a dense mass of large and long stalactites. Passing to the end of this chamber, there is nothing but a forest of pillars, formed by the union of stalactites and stalagmites, with a few dark holes between them. On getting into one of these holes, a passage is entered, which is flanked on every side by rows of pillars, between the bases of which are stalagmite basins full of water. This avenue of pillars extends for about twenty-five yards, when the cave again widens out into a large and beautiful chamber, called the 'Queen's Chamber,' which is about fifty yards long by thirty-five yards wide. From every part of the roof hang a perfect forest of stalactites, many of which are four feet in diameter at the base, while between these hang smaller and more delicate stalactites. The floor is principally of large stalagmites standing up from it,

and among these lie many stalactites, which have fallen from the roof. It is also in many places strewn with well-rounded and water-worn boulders and pebbles, the presence of which shows that at one time a stream of water had flowed through the cavern."

Referring to the right-hand cavern, Mr. Anderson says:—"The passage into this cave opens out into a large chamber, which is one of the finest in the caves. When seen from the entrance it presents a mass of stalagmites, some standing alone, and others in large groups, which bring to mind the spires and turrets of some great cathedral. After passing through a small entrance called the Blow Hole, the largest chamber yet discovered in these caves is entered. This is an enormous cavern, which apparently has a small opening high up on the hillside. It is very probable that there are other caves in connection with this one whose entrances are not yet known. Apart from the scientific interest of these caves, as preservers of the remains of some of our extinct fauna, they have also a public interest in that they will repay the visitor both by their own natural beauty and by the magnificent mountain scenery which is to be seen by either route."

At Murrumburrah Station, some twenty-three miles on the Sydney side of Cootamundra, there will be an important junction, as it is from this point that a line is being constructed to connect the Great Southern with the Great Western Trunk Railway at Blayney. The object of this line is to connect Bourke and all the places that lie on the western side of the mountains with Albury, Melbourne, and Adelaide. Albury and Bourke would thus be joined without any crossing of the Dividing Range. Murrumburrah is a good many feet (730) above Albury, but the line to Sydney climbs yet another thousand shortly before Goulburn. The saving in time, too, as well as in climbing, will be considerable. It is easy to foresee that Junee and Murrumburrah will in the future be the important junctions on the line.



ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL, GOULBURN.

Forty-three miles further on is Yass, "an important and thriving town, prettily situated on the banks of the Yass River," and boasting the finest court-house out of Sydney. Fifty-three miles from Yaas is Goulburn, placed near the junction of the Mulwarrie Ponds with the Wollondilly River, noted for its cathedral. From this place a line is being constructed running south, and parallel to the main line between Cootamundra and Albury. This line will go to Cooma: forty-three miles of it are now open. From the point of view of picturesque scenery, it is specially interesting as bringing the "lake district" of New South Wales within easy reach of travellers. The lakes in this district are but two in number, and are known

respectively as Lake Bathurst and Lake George. Lake George is by far the larger of the two, being about twenty-five miles in length by eight in breadth. It is situated on table-land forming part of the Dividing Range, at a height of 2,129 feet above the sea. Lofty hills rise in its immediate neighbourhood. "The lake itself" says Mr. H. C. Russell, the Government Astronomer of New South Wales, "is situated in a depression between two ranges of hills, some of which, on the western side, rise to 1,500 feet above the lake. On the eastern side the hills generally stand some little

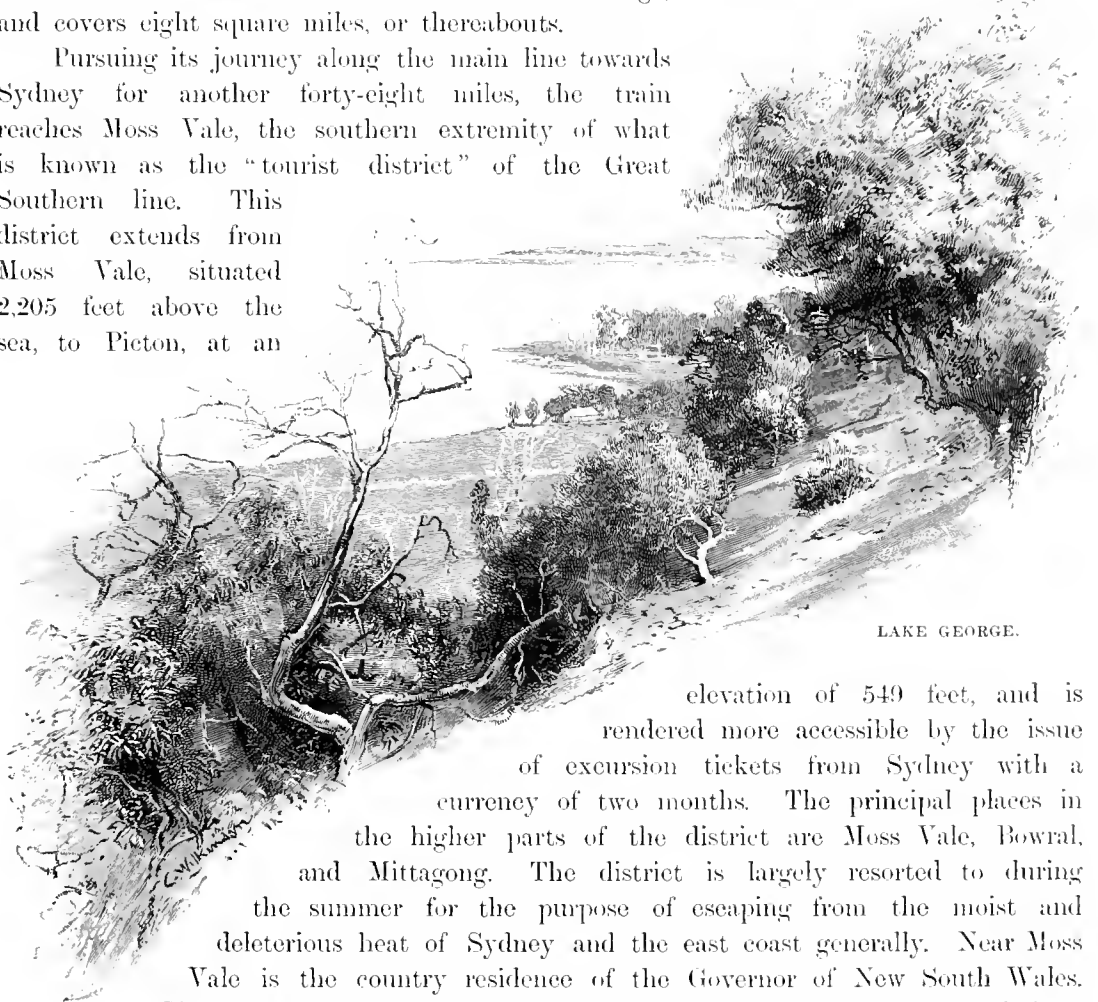


SADDLE CUTTING, BARGO BRUSH.

distance from the water; but on the western side—at least, in a part of it—the hills seem to rise abruptly out of the water at an angle of 30° to 45° . The hills are composed of hard metamorphic rocks, the fragments of which are carried down into the lake by every shower, and are very soon polished into gravel by the action of the waves; and the enormous deposits of gravel at both ends of the lake, where the ground is flat, as well as along the sides, point to a duration of present conditions which is very hard to realise. . . . In the absence of levels, it is impossible to say what was the extreme size of the lake in its wet period, but, I should think, at least forty miles long and ten or twelve wide. The steep hills which bound the lake on the west

side are deeply furrowed by water, and afford striking evidence of a time when rain must have fallen in vastly greater abundance than it does at the present day. Each of these gullies, when examined, is found to have a more or less extensive delta, which has spread out laterally and into the lakes, forming there a projecting point opposite the gully. These are now covered with trees, and add very much to the beauty of the lake by their picturesque effect." Lake Bathurst is about ten miles to the eastward of Lake George, and covers eight square miles, or thereabouts.

Pursuing its journey along the main line towards Sydney for another forty-eight miles, the train reaches Moss Vale, the southern extremity of what is known as the "tourist district" of the Great Southern line. This district extends from Moss Vale, situated 2,205 feet above the sea, to Picton, at an



LAKE GEORGE.

elevation of 549 feet, and is rendered more accessible by the issue of excursion tickets from Sydney with a currency of two months. The principal places in the higher parts of the district are Moss Vale, Bowral, and Mittagong. The district is largely resorted to during the summer for the purpose of escaping from the moist and deleterious heat of Sydney and the east coast generally. Near Moss Vale is the country residence of the Governor of New South Wales.

Five miles off is the township of Berrima, on the old main road from Sydney to the South, perhaps now chiefly distinguished as the site of one of the great gaols of the colony. Twelve miles from Moss Vale, in another direction, are the Fitzroy Falls, which are well worth a visit.

Bowral is six miles from Moss Vale, and Mittagong is three miles from Bowral. Between Bowral and Mittagong is the Gibraltar Tunnel, about 570 yards in length. This tunnel passes near the foot of Mount Gibraltar, or as it is familiarly called, "The Gib," from the top of which there is a very fine view of the picturesque hill country

extending far away beyond Mittagong. Bowral enjoys a great reputation for salubrity of climate, and has accordingly of late years become one of the most popular neighbourhoods for summer residence. The country is less broken than that round Mittagong, and is better suited for driving. Mittagong, on the other hand, has decidedly the advantage in the way of interesting expeditions on foot. This place is likely in time to become an important industrial centre, the neighbourhood furnishing coal, iron, and kerosene shale. The extensive works of the Joadja Kerosene Mine are distant from the railway station about sixteen miles, but are easily accessible by means of a light railway belonging to the mining company.

At Mittagong comes the final pause for refreshments, and soon after leaving the station the descent of the southern mountains begins. In the course of eighteen miles to Picton Lakes the level falls about a thousand feet, and in the next six miles to the town of Picton it falls another five hundred. Picton is named after General Sir Thomas Picton, who led the "fighting" division in the Peninsular War, and afterwards fell at Waterloo. It is prettily situated, being surrounded by gently undulating hills. The railway works include a large viaduct, and the Redbank Tunnel, 198 yards in length. Not far from Picton is the Pheasants' Nest, at the junction of the Nepean and Cordeaux Rivers, from which point the works for the new water supply for Sydney begin. At Menangle, thirteen miles beyond Picton, the line crosses the Nepean, which in the lower part of its course becomes identified with the Hawkesbury. Six miles further on is Campbelltown, from which place there is a tramway to Camden, one of the oldest towns in the colony. Twelve miles beyond Campbelltown the line passes another of the old towns, Liverpool, on George's River, where there is a large asylum for old and infirm men. On the outskirts of the town towards Sydney is the Anglican theological college, known as Moore College, founded in March, 1856, under the will of the late Thomas Moore, of Liverpool. He was originally a ship's carpenter, who received a large grant of land, and ultimately became the squire of the place. The college has been the means of educating about 150 candidates for the ministry of the Church of England, nearly all of whom are still working in the Australian colonies. The buildings comprise a residence for the Principal (built by the founder), and a newer portion for the students. The chapel is called "Broughton Chapel," after the late Bishop Broughton, first and only "Bishop of Australia," with whom the idea of founding the college originated. In the Liverpool Park a rude memorial of Captain Cook still exists. It is an insignificant obelisk, about nine feet high, with eccentric spellings, which, however, are not due to the original hand, as faint tracings of the original letters are visible.

From Granville, where the line joins the Great Western from Bourke to Sydney over the Blue Mountains, the remainder of the run to Sydney, consisting of about thirteen miles, is through nearly continuous suburban towns. At Strathfield, eight miles from Sydney, is the junction with the Great Northern line, which runs to the Queensland border near Tenterfield, and will before long supply the last link now wanting to complete a continuous line of railway between Adelaide and Brisbane. A few minutes later, and

the train reaches the terminus at Redfern Station, having for the last mile or two run parallel with the South Coast or Illawarra line. The journey has been long enough to render release from a railway carriage peculiarly welcome; but, unless through some accident or unforeseen cause of delay, the passengers will find themselves set at liberty with commendable punctuality to the published time. Of the station itself—after what has been said of Spencer Street—it may be fair to quote the judgment of Mr. Froude, that it is, “like all other stations, merely convenient and hideous.”





GLENALVON, THE LAST STATION IN THE HUNTER VALLEY.

LIVERPOOL PLAINS AND NEW ENGLAND.

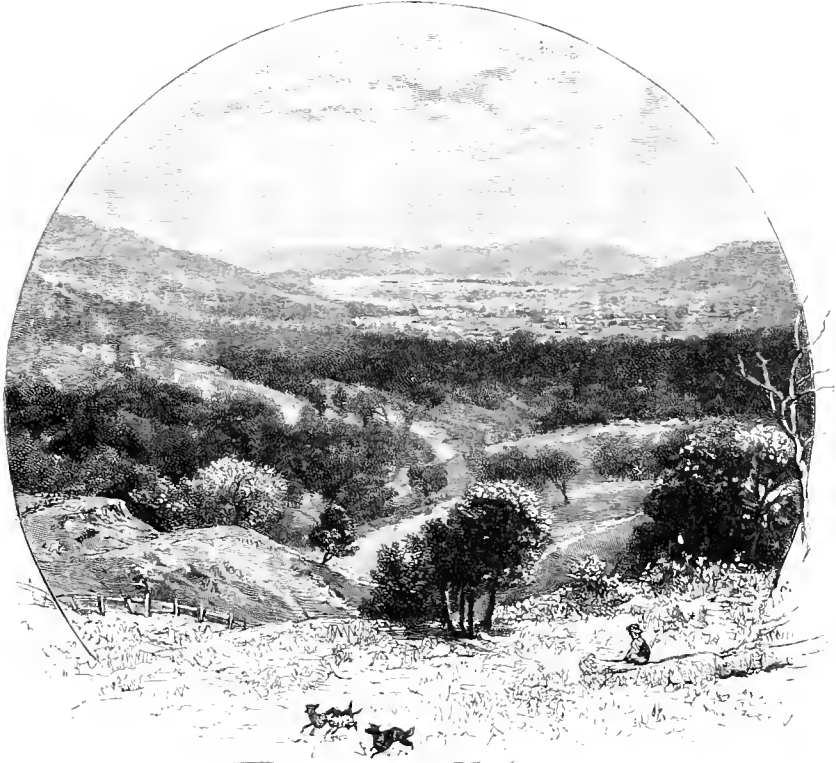
The New England Plateau—An Unfortunate Settler—The Old Days—Nature's Gift—Monotony—Drought—Coal—Gumedah—Beetive—A Deserted Gold Field—Armidale—Glen Innes—The Bluff—Land but no People—State Intervention.

NO ONE having anything like an intimate knowledge of the great island continent would feel disposed to dispute the theory that along the shores, and over the eastern and south-eastern slopes especially, a large population must eventually settle down. Agricultural settlement, comparatively dense, must also take place all over the table-land—the great New England plateau of New South Wales—which has an elevation of 3,000 feet above sea-level, and covers an area of about 7,000 square miles; while the western slopes, falling away to the 800 feet level, will be closely packed with holdings of moderate size, on which cultivation of the land will be combined with stock-raising, dairying, and wool-growing. It is to these upper levels, with their western slopes and to the vast extent of plain lying at their feet, that the reader's attention will now be particularly directed.

Going back on the dial of the nineteenth century some seventy years, we may picture surveyor Oxley standing on the heights of the coast range at Newcastle, 3,500 feet above ocean-level, on the memorable 26th August, 1818, scanning with eager eyes the horizon north to west, viewing the splendid land waiting to be occupied—to be the habitation of thousands upon thousands of old-world workers and in clarity we may perhaps forgive him for inflicting upon it a name it has ever since endured—that of Lord Liverpool, then Premier of England. Oxley's report soon reached the ears of colonists ready for a venture, and about the years 1826 and 1827 a spirited band, comprising Messrs. Singleton, Baldwin, Onus, and Williams, crossed the Liverpool range at the head of Dartbrook, to form cattle stations in Yarrimanbah and Onus' Creeks; and, some months later, a Mr.

William Nowland settled in Warrah Creek—country now forming part of the Australian Agricultural Company's estate.

Mr. Nowland, who seems to have possessed wonderful energy and patience, afterwards proceeded down the River Namoi, 150 miles further inland, to a place called Drildool. Here he experienced considerable difficulty with the blacks, and was in great distress from want of water, losing from both causes about 300 head of cattle. Finally he threw



MURRURUNDI AND THE VALLEY OF THE HUNTER.

up the run, and, in November, 1839, purchased Walhollow Station, on the River Mooki, from Messrs. Parrott and Ross, and afterwards became involved in legal proceedings that lasted over twenty years—a suit in which twenty thousand pounds passed over to the lawyers, and which will never be forgotten whenever the name of Walhollow is mentioned.

It appears, then, that to Mr. Nowland belongs the honour of having discovered the pass over the Liverpool range sixty years ago; and it is interesting to know that it is the easiest of them all. The steep mountains over which his bullock-teams painfully and wearily dragged the first load of rations and other necessaries, have since been graded to form a gentle and easy ascent; and since then, again, at this very pass, pierced by a tunnel, the iron horse takes its cushioned and curtained carriages, and its lines of loaded trucks, to north and west, spreading comfort and luxury where the old pioneer found only privation, want, and danger. But Mr. Nowland did not long remain in the

district, for he left it in April, 1842, probably because he was refused a depasturing licence by Commissioner Mayne, on the ground that "he had by his conduct" subjected himself to that gentleman's serious displeasure.

Those old days are full of incident, and indeed their story has dashes of curious romance. It tells of convict gangs working to make the inland roads we use to-day, and bushranging adventures never to be repeated more. In it we have particulars of bravery and pitiful chicanery, crime and adventurous courage, which stand out in bold relief against the monotony, the indolence, the gabble of the present time.

Standing on the threshold of the Liverpool Plains, we must give one last fond look back to the Hunter Valley, the silver streak of the little River Page, and Murrumbidgee village with its shining houses miles away below; then "right about," descend the western slopes of the Main Range, pass along Doughboy Hollow Creek (old Nowland's camp), cross various low spurs, and having descended 1,000 feet in eight miles, reach "Willow Tree." This was an old coaching house of call; now a railway station stands close by, just within the boundaries of the Australian Agricultural Company's domain.

This immense property, containing 249,600 acres of the richest soil the earth can boast of, is only one of three which were handed over by the Government of England in fee simple to a company of influential British speculators for a peppercorn! A few miles further north, other 313,218 acres were presented to them; and at Port Stephens a vast estate, including 464,640 acres, was added to the previous two; finally, at Newcastle, the richest coalfield in the Southern Hemisphere was thrown into their hands:

Plains, park-like lands, or downs salute us on either side, while every few miles we cross a babbling creek shaded by colonial oaks. Fence after fence is crossed. A flock of sheep is perhaps feeding—widespread—far away; a few cattle may be seen near at hand, browsing the rich pasture—Nature's gift. The country in other respects appears more desolate than it was nearly sixty years ago. Then, the aborigines made merry in this uncultivated Eden: now, the silence is rarely broken except by the boundary-rider's whistle. We reach the portal of this immense reserve, and at once enter the domain of *bona fide* settlement, stretching away to the north-western corner of "the Grant," and meet the River Mooki. This watercourse makes part of the average "divide" between pastoral occupation and agricultural settlement, winding its way through splendid lands to the River Namoi, which it joins at Gunnedah. The last-named river takes up the running to the town of Narrabri; then the dividing-line continues its course north-easterly to the point of the Nandewar range, which has been buried in these western plains, and bending northwards, winds round the highland spurs to the Queensland boundary.

All west of this is country purely pastoral, most of it of the richest character—a black soil, on the wash of ages, from sixty to two hundred feet in depth, with water everywhere below—while patches of desert-sand, hundreds of thousands of acres in extent, are met with in the counties of Baradine and White. The rich country stretching away to Walgett is generally open—always flat; the poorer sandy lands referred to are covered with scrub and undergrowth, and produce the finest timber found in the district. It is only natural that here population should be sparse, and of course large town-settlement is impossible. The most important centres are Gunnedah, at the edge;

Narrabri, well inside the grazing area; and Walgett, on the western frontier of the district. At all these places courts are held for the administration of justice, the sale of land, and other governmental purposes.

The monotony of this part of New South Wales is absolutely irksome; it impresses the features and manners of the people whom fate has placed here. Its past history is that of yesterday, with the exception that, in old Nowland's time, sheep were unknown, and there were blacks to give a dash of adventure to life. It knows no spring nor autumn; no restful twilight succeeds the glare of day. It is a country of extremes of heat and drought and torrent. For several seasons together cattle are rolling fat, pushing about through grasses ten feet high; and then the plains are a desert, quivering with blasting heat, whitened with skeleton-bones and ghastly skulls.

In these fearful droughts, notwithstanding the apparent aridity of the atmosphere, the quantity of moisture it contains must be considerable. How often, during these dreaded periods, have our settlers strained their eyes to the westward day by day, in anxious hope for some break in the relentless metallic glare of a summer sunset! At last a sign is given; days elapse; again the sun falls in the west—other clouds appear suddenly in the sky, raising hopes of some relief in the almost hopeless watchers. An hour passes—the clouds have vanished! They have not been driven off on the wings of the wind; they have not been hidden in the obscurity of evening. They have been dissolved in the warm air from which they had just been drawn by contact with a cold eastern current, which, lowering the temperature locally below the dew-point, deposited the welcome precursors of rain. Again and again is this aerial performance repeated; again and again are the eyes that are strained heavenwards doomed to disappointment; but at last the looked-for rain arrives, and from that dry and scorching air the downfall comes in streams.

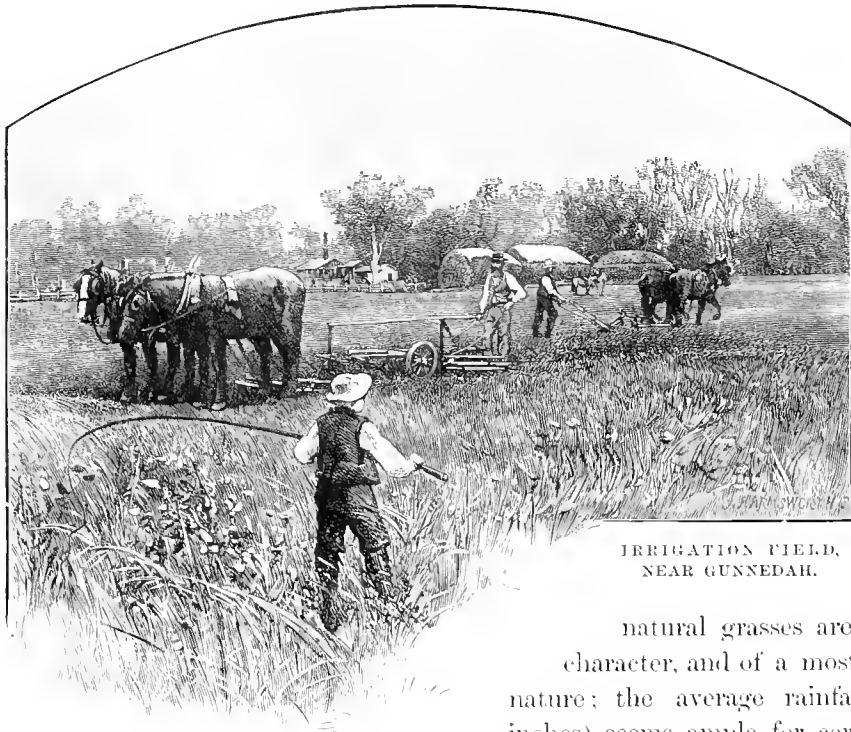
As an instance—and by no means an extreme one—of the losses incurred even in this favoured district, let it be mentioned that on Breeza station (close to Gunnedah), in the year 1877, no less than 9,000 cattle, 100 horses, and 8,000 sheep died from starvation, and, had not the remaining stock been removed in time, 25,000 or 30,000 more sheep would have shared the same fate.

One has not forgotten how Bishop Moorhouse, in a spirit of philanthropy, attracted attention to the losses of stockowners in these exceptional seasons of distress, and, while ridiculing, in Palmerstonian fashion, supplication to Heaven on such a subject, advocated the construction of dams and tanks, and well-digging where practicable, to turn the tables on Dame Nature by artificially providing water for "the beasts which perish." But the worthy bishop took no account of other requirements of sheep and cattle, nor was he in the slightest degree conversant with the works already executed by proprietors. As a matter of fact, no stock have ever died from want of water, but merely from want of food; and it is the problem of the day among the authorities whether the expenditure of more millions of borrowed money on the vast irrigation works proposed by some will succeed in covering plains with unfading verdure, and if so, whether the game is worth the candle.

From Narrabri—697 feet above sea-level—the present terminus of the North-

Western Railway, we can patronise the train (which, like most other things in this country, is run at a yearly loss), and, passing through Gunnedah and Breeza, reach Tamworth and the extreme verge of New England; or we may take a pilgrimage along the roads leading upwards, thus obtaining a more leisurely survey of the land than is afforded by an excursion on the line.

Adopting the latter course, we find the country for the first few miles light and sandy. It then changes to rich black soil, with areas of red clay or loam, which carry us to Gunnedah. The upper crust we walk over is good enough for anything. The



IRRIGATION FIELD,
NEAR GUNNEDAH.

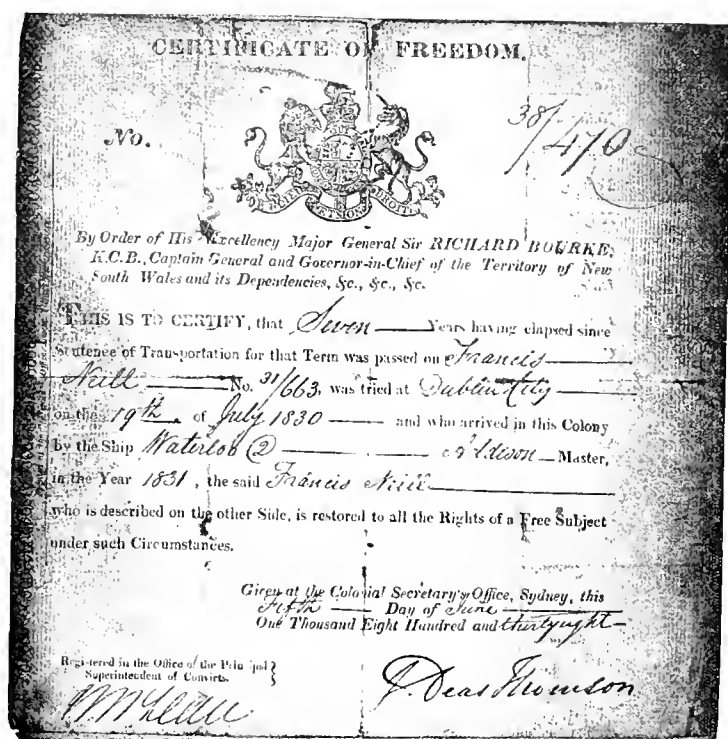
natural grasses are varied in character, and of a most fattening nature; the average rainfall (twenty inches) seems ample for cereal crops; the surface is practically level, having

a rise in 60 miles of less than 180 feet. Water is more or less abundant everywhere *below*, even when streams dry up. Yet, strange to note, settlement is scarce, and all the way to Boggabri—a wayside village—we have not met one soul. And onwards to Gunnedah also, the land rests peacefully, a “run” for sheep and cattle. No hum of labour disturbs its calm repose, though thistles, burrs, and noxious weeds on either side denote the frequent passage of stock.

The summer is late, so that grass and herbage, which have been luxuriant for the past six months, are still beautiful and green; but by-and-by—some two weeks hence, perhaps—it will pay its unwelcome visit and envelop the land in parching heat, so that once more will springs dry up, and the River Namoi stay its stream; tall grass and trefoil must bake and wither and tumble into dust; the earth will open its fissures, craving for a drink; whirlwinds of fiery dust, propelled by aerial currents, will

mount upwards, messengers from the desiccated soil; the giant eucalypti will be motionless except when thus momentarily disturbed; while birds and all animate nature will cower from sight, apparently without sense or motion, till the sun go down, and night's blessed mantle, in very mercy, cover the desolation that lies spread all around.

With such a climate land, however rich, can never wisely be dedicated to agriculture. This vast expanse is even now profitably used, although it is in the possession of but a few sheep-owners; and should their great estates be reduced in size, and the proprietary increased in number, better results will follow and these now purely pastoral



FAC-SIMILE (REDUCED) OF A CERTIFICATE OF FREEDOM.

lands, with the assistance of limited, well-directed agriculture, will produce still greater returns.

But the country just traversed holds beneath its bosom wealth untold. Below its crust lie beds of coal as yet untouched, the strata little disturbed from the position where the old forests were overwhelmed, perhaps a million years ago, except at localities subjected to volcanic eruptions in past ages. Instead of the ferns—the sigillaria and calamites of coal measures in other lands, proclaiming in *bas-relief* the varied tropical vegetation of those wondrous times—here the glossopteris, or bird's-nest species, is found compressed in masses throughout the Sandstone drift, proving the series to be identical with that extending east of the main range to Newcastle, and out again, for miles and miles, to the old shores buried beneath the great Pacific Ocean. And, looking

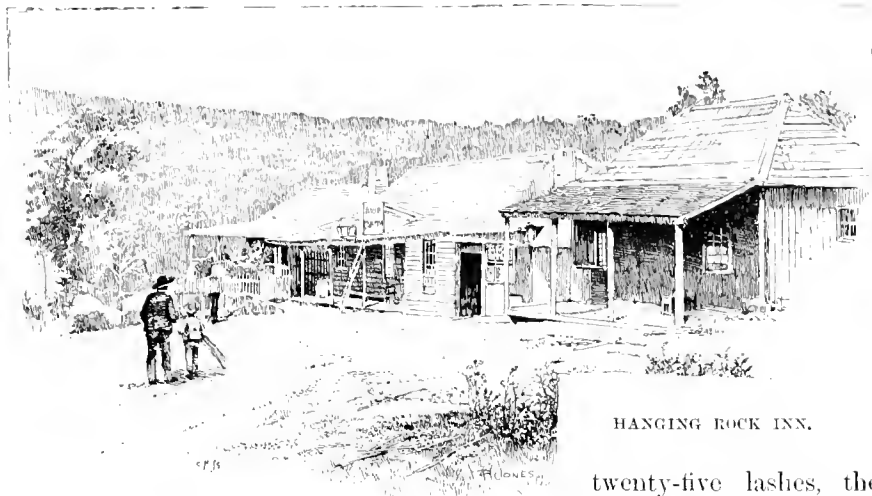
down the vista of the future, we see thousands of willing hands bringing to the surface the precious treasure which has so long lain concealed.

Gunnedah, the "White Stone" of the blacks, is pleasantly situated on a gentle slope falling to the River Namoi, 874 feet above sea-level. Thirty years ago a wayside weatherboard inn stood here, the nucleus of the present town, the place being then called "The Woolshed." Now substantial public buildings, business and private houses, abound on all sides. It is an incorporated borough; its streets have been aligned, and there is a railway station. In close proximity are small holdings devoted to agriculture, with vegetable gardens under Chinese management, or used as grazing paddocks, and within a few miles are the larger properties, or runs, serving exclusively for stock.

To this rule there is, however, one exception, proving that the combination of agriculture with wool-growing may be extremely profitable. At the Gunnible station irrigation works are conducted on a moderate scale at a minimum cost: the source of supply being the River Namoi, and the raising power a steam-engine erected for the "wool wash," for which duty it is required but two months in the year. Here, from forty acres, six cuttings of lucern hay are annually stacked for station use, while wheat, pumpkins, and fruit grow to perfection in their seasons. The contrast which this oasis presents with the desolation of the surrounding lands in times of drought is very striking, indicating the generous response nature is ever ready to give to the intelligent industry of man. It is right to point out, however, that this estate has exceptional advantages in most respects over others in the district.

Leaving Gunnedah, we at once cross the little River Mooki, and in twelve miles, having traversed magnificent country, all of which, judging from the farms along the route, seems perfectly adapted for cultivation, reach Carroll, a wayside village looking out upon a treeless plain. Near this village the Rivers Peel and Namoi join, and from this point the rise in elevation increases considerably each mile. All along the road, and far away to the westward, extending to the town of Barraba, the land is in the hands of small proprietors, who on countless small holdings grow cereal crops and fruit, and graze their dairy cattle or flocks of sheep, contributing their produce to the Tamworth and Sydney markets.

A few miles further on Beetive is reached, a valuable estate comprising numerous small properties of rich soil: and soon the road is crossed by the boundary fence of the second of the extraordinary grants referred to above. And this glorious land, fit home for a thousand tillers of the soil, bounded by the Peel River for nearly sixty miles, is a run for stock! Now, 1,270 feet above sea-level, Tamworth, the capital of this far-famed district, breaks upon the view, its villas glistening on the mountain-slopes, its business streets intersecting at right angles the green valley of the Peel, the whole backed by a high mountain range, presenting a landscape absolutely fascinating. This town was designed in 1849. But three years before it was proclaimed a place for holding Courts of Petty Sessions. In those good old days justice was administered in a curious fashion. For example, at a magistrates' meeting held at Tamworth on the 8th of February, 1840, three prisoners of the Government, charged with



HANGING ROCK INN.

intendent, could not spare them just then, "owing to the quantity of work to be done on the station," but he considerably promised to "send them down to the triangles as early as possible!" What an admirable incentive to the poor wretches to do their best in the interval! Among the illustrations to this article, by the way, is a memento of convict days in the form of a *fac-simile* of a certificate of freedom, granted to one Francis Neill, an Irishman, who had "done" his seven years, and, let us hope, was the better and not the worse for his experiences in this part of the world.

In 1857 Tamworth consisted of two brick houses, some slab and weatherboard huts, and some wooden stores, to accommodate some hundred people. Now its public buildings are a credit to the colony, its business houses numerous and extensive, its population numbered by thousands. In 1857, again, postal arrangements were of the most primitive order—a grocer's clerk was the postmaster, and mails were delivered once or twice a week, as circumstances permitted. Now the work is carried on in a noble building by an efficient staff of clerks and electricians. In those old days a solitary policeman kept watch and ward on tracks and townsmen. Municipal government now rules the roads, churches and chapels built by the people invite to worship, and public schools, attended by nearly 600 scholars, boys and girls, teach every child to read, write, and reckon.

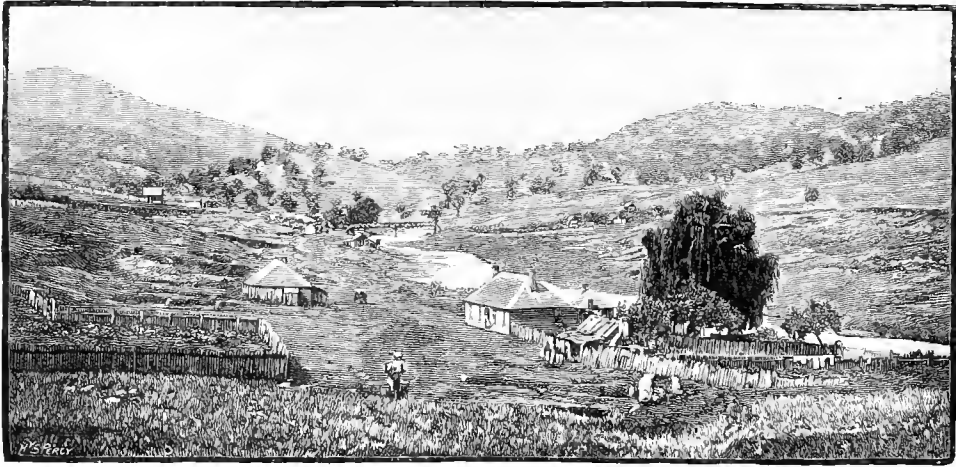
Leaving the town and ascending the River Peel, in eight-and-twenty miles we reach a gold-field. For years, hundreds of diggers made wages or a fortune on Bowling Alley Point, and the way in which the country has been torn up in search of the yellow metal shows the vast amount of labour expended here.

Eight miles beyond we pass through the diggers' town of Nundle, and five miles further stand on the summit of the Hanging Rock, 3,300 feet in height. The ridges hereabout are rich in gold. The geological formation of the district just traversed consists of altered Devonian slates, sandstones, and limestones, in which, from Bowling Alley Point to Hanging Rock, occur beds of serpentine and masses of diorite. The geological surveyor reports that "the igneous rocks and Devonian rocks in their

disobedience to the orders of an overseer of the Australian Agricultural Company, were sentenced, in the face of strong rebutting evidence, to corporal punishment — one to receive

twenty-five lashes, the other two fifty each. Mr. Hall, the Company's Super-

vicinity are traversed by gold-bearing quartz veins; that in Tertiary times the country was drained by rivers, in the channels of which rich gold-drifts accumulated, and were covered by flows of basalt; that in more recent times these formations were extensively denuded, deep valleys being eroded in them; and that since the year 1852



BOWLING ALLEY POINT.

the alluvial deposits in the valleys and in the ancient river channels, as well as the reefs, have yielded gold to the value of nearly £900,000." He further expresses the opinion "that the resources of this gold-field are far from being exhausted, and that quartz-mining will be permanent."

Gold-bearing country is, as a rule, exceptionally poor as regards surface soil, but this offers a marked contrast, for all the way to Walcha it is rich in humus or vegetable matter, springs and creeks are met with every few miles, and splendid timber, grass, and ferns give proof of its fertility.

Of course, even in this deserted gold-field a public school is found. Some thirty children, belonging to the diggers and garden agriculturists who dot the hills around, attend their daily class. An inn, with a landlord who has delved for tin in Cornwall, for copper in North America, for silver in South America, and all round here for precious gold—still active, intelligent, and strong—invites us to a "camp" and a glass of Tamworth beer; then on we go along the narrow highland promontory, the country opening by degrees, but all the way varied by ridge and valley, streams and little plains.

Crossing the Macdonald River (really the head of the River Namoi, which we have met at Narrabri, Gunnedah, and on the Carroll road), Walcha is at length reached—a village in a teacup—through which the little Apsley, shaded with willows, meanders slowly eastward to its falls. From here to Uralla the country spreads well out. Large runs for stock—great freeholds acquired years ago—and modest farms with pretty cottages, proclaim the prosperity and comfort of these highland homes.

The Rocky River gold-fields lie two miles to the west, where fabulous amounts of metal have been raised in years gone by; and ten miles further on, along a splendid road scented with sweetbriar and bordered with orchards and other small estates, we enter Armidale, 3,300 feet above the level of the sea. Unlike most other Australian towns, it boasts a show; indeed, two places of interest may be discovered by the artistically disposed — Dangar and Woolomumbi Falls. Both falls, if the water supply be fairly good, look well, but neither gives the mind the sense of awe which is experienced on looking over the Blue Mountain precipice at Govett's Leap. Waterfalls without water for nine months in the year are not specially attractive; still they are *breaks* which, relieving the monotony of the bush, are naturally made much of.

The road from Armidale northwards to the boundary of New South Wales presents no features of special interest. The railway has almost monopolised the traffic, and the few houses of accommodation which remain are not inviting. The steepness of the country involves even by rail a slow ascent, and while, puffing and straining, the train covers but twenty miles an hour, ample time is found to note the general aspect of the land for miles on either side.

The time-table shows that we are now 260 miles from Newcastle, and we are 3,313



GREY STREET, GLEN INNES.

feet above sea-level. As the train moves on, we pass numerous small holdings in the valleys, enriched by the washings of the basalt hills adjoining. From Eversleigh, where there is a railway station, the character of the country changes physically for the worse. The hills are steeper and more scrubby, and rocks fatal to the plough crop up abundantly; but from the Black Mountain station onwards to Glen Innes, some

forty miles away, the soil is rich, and, so far as can be judged, well suited to be the farming homes of many thousand colonists. At Guyra, on the road, is the far-famed Mother of Ducks, a swamp more than a thousand acres in extent, covered with wildfowl; and at Ben Lomond we cross a spur of the mountain of that name, which is the source of numerous creeks and rivers, and rears its head aloft about 5,000 feet.

From Stonehenge, named from its granite boulders and supposed resemblance to the Druids' plain in England, farms are more frequent; and at each tiny settlement a school-house has been built, where backwoods children are whipped in to read and write. Running by masses of granite rock, fringing a little creek, Glen Innes at last comes in view. Not so very long ago this town was but a village, eminently Scotch: a few houses built of wood along a narrow street, a quaint courthouse, a silent, ruined-looking flour-mill, and a tiny church, with three or four general stores, possessed the site; but suddenly tin was discovered, and from that day to this its progress has been phenomenal. In its one-street state, to move a hundred yards and keep one's boots in rainy weather was ever doubtful. Now its roads are good and under municipal control, its buildings all that a population of 2,000 souls should want; and before long branch railways will connect it with the town of Inverell, passing westwards through miles of agricultural and grazing land, and eastwards winding down the steep mountain range to Grafton, the Clarence River port.

All the land some distance from Glen Innes is stanniferous. Its mines have supplied the English and foreign markets with thousands of tons of tin, and if well drained and worked, the country everywhere should produce good crops of grain, fruit, and potatoes. At Inverell the country is basaltic, and particularly suited for vineyards and the growth of fruit and cereal crops. Here wine of excellent quality and flavour, red and white, is made, which, if properly placed before the English public, would command high prices.

Northwards from Glen Innes, the country is less inviting, but there is a wide stretch of level agricultural land about Deepwater and Dundee, craving for settlement. A great sweep of country herefrom to Tenterfield seems to have been terribly denuded in past ages, and great rounded granite boulders on the surface or half hidden in the drift speak of floods, and torrents, such as we can have no conception of now.

The Bluff, ten miles from town, is quite the attraction here, while the cutting through the diorite and trap a mile away is the last feature on the line. Tenterfield is the present terminus of the Northern Railway, which, however, is being extended eleven miles further to Warangara, a wee bit of a village right on the Queensland border. Tenterfield is built on downs studded with granite boulders, and sloping to a willow-shaded creek. The air is crisp and light, though its elevation, 2,827 feet above the sea, is far less than that of Glen Innes, which is 3,518 feet.

The tin-fields at Stanthorpe, not far away, but across the border, gave impetus to settlement some time ago. And now the gold-fields at Red Rock and Fairfield promise to increase the population vastly for some years to come, while mines at Emmaville still help the town along.

Truly the plains spreading in western distance are rich indeed. The level stretch

from Narrabri to Gunnedah would woo the eye of Hesiod's ploughman. The slopes from the last-named town through Tamworth to the feet of the Golden Hills seem created to produce wine and oil, breadstuffs and wool. Still all are subject more or less to intervals of heat and drought which temporarily paralyse the energies of man. But high up on this plateau, kissed with clouds, fresh bracing winds in summer chase away the desiccating heat, while snows in winter keep moist both valleys and mountain-tops.

The climate of New England is invigorating throughout the year. Instead of grapes, peaches, and semi-tropical fruit, growing to perfection, gooseberries, apples, pears, currants, cherries, and blackberries, and all the fruits of lesser Britain thrive in profusion; and in place of the pale faces of the lowlands near at hand, we see ruddy cheeks and bright eyes, the signs of energy and health. But where is the population which should make glad this glorious land? In astounding ignorance of the first principles of national prosperity, immigration has been vetoed, and even assisted passages to this silent, waiting land have been peremptorily stopped. Without the assistance of immigration on a far larger scale than has hitherto been attempted by the State, it will for centuries be impossible to settle these country districts advantageously. It is unfortunately true that our cities and towns are crowded with men and boys who, having no practical or useful knowledge at command, could not, if they would, settle in the interior. The professions are followed by more persons than can obtain a decent livelihood. Trades are overstocked with labour, and Government offices are crammed with those whose employment should be found elsewhere.

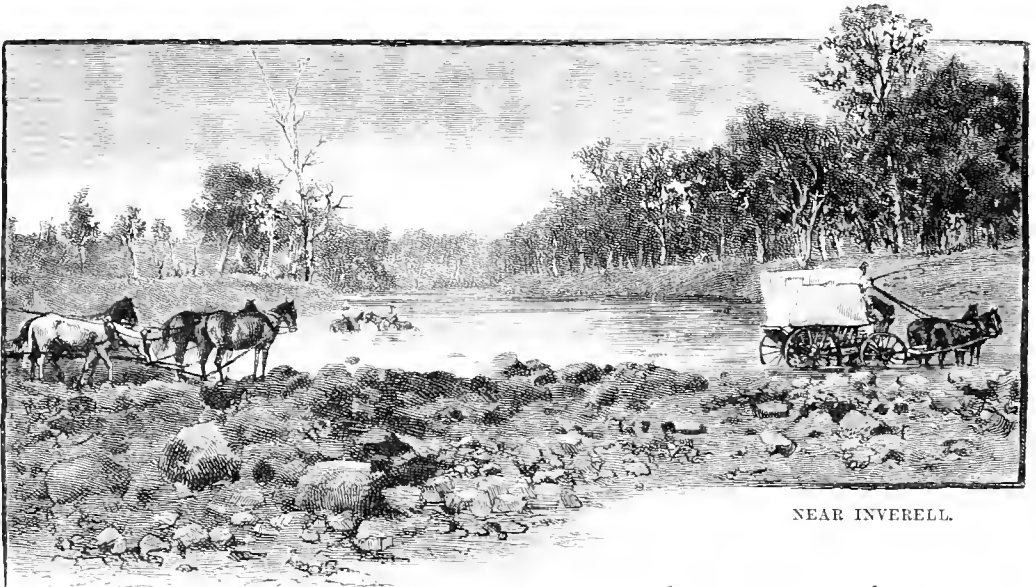
When we consider that the land is the original source of all the country's wealth and progress, it must appear surprising that while a most lavish endowment has been made for education in the direction of mercantile pursuits and the liberal professions, no provision has hitherto been thought imperative for training colonial youth towards obtaining a mastery of its soil and very fickle climate. When we read of the efforts made in America and Europe, and of the enormous State expenditure authorised in France, Germany, and Austria, to promote the knowledge of agricultural science, it must be evident to the most thoughtless that the end sought is one of vital interest and of the most urgent importance, an importance, indeed, which cannot be exaggerated.



THE DANGAR FALLS.

In Victoria steps have already been taken in this direction. The Department of Agriculture, presided over by the Minister for Lands, furnishes an annual report of proceedings, and conducts scientific experiments most useful to the community. Chemical analyses are made of the various soils, manures, and herbage, and correspondence has been opened with kindred societies all over the world. So far, perhaps, the good results have not been sufficiently appreciated; but the seed has been sown of a tree of knowledge which in after-years will bring forth abundant fruit and enrich the land in which it has been planted.

Without attempting to realise the schemes and theories of Bacon or Campanella, or of such men as Fourier and John Humphrey Noyes in later days—which refer,

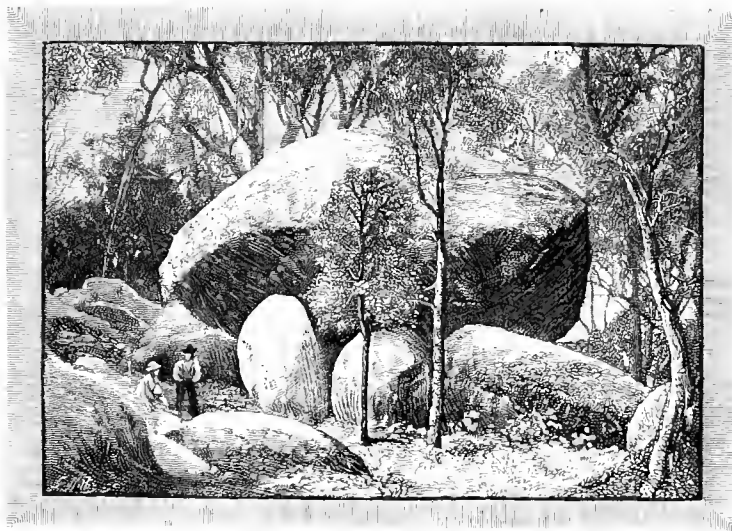


NEAR INVERELL.

perhaps, more to the government of populations than to the management of country lands—the establishment, in each district, of colleges like those now doing good service in Europe, with well subsidised village schools and societies, acting in concert with and leading up to them, would prove of incalculable benefit to the country at large.

This district, and this alone, can be looked upon as the storehouse, the granary, of Australia: every effort should therefore be made to increase its productiveness. Instead of having to be imported to meet the wants of the population, wheat could and should be grown at such a price and in such quantities as not only to shut out foreign competition, but to leave a surplus for export to other lands till local demands absorb the produce: and those who engage in the pursuit properly—that is to say, with capital at command and knowledge to guide its expenditure—may confidently look forward to a profitable return for their labour at the outset, with the prospect of wealth after the lapse of a few years. It would be well to bear in mind the pregnant sentence of Baron Liebig: “When the State is shaken to its foundations by internal or external events;

when commerce, industry, and all the trades shall be at a stand, and perhaps on the brink of ruin; when the property and fortunes of all are shattered or changed, and the inhabitants of towns look forward with dread and apprehension to the future—then the agriculturist holds in his hand the key to the money-chest of the rich and the savings-box of the poor.”



GRANITE ROCKS NEAR TENTERFIELD.

THE SHEEP AND HIS WOOL.

The Merino—Land of the Golden Fleece—A Wool Cæsus—Squatters—The Boundary Rider—The Sheep and his Foes—Shearing and Shearers—The Wool Trade—Drought—Wool Sales—Mutton, Fresh and Frozen.



THE origin of the merino sheep, like that of a good many other ancient and noble families, is lost in the obscurity of a dim past, but it is admitted that the breed existed in Spain from the earliest times of which we have any record, and that it was improved by strains of African blood through the agency of rams brought from Bombay by Pedro IV. of Castile and Cardinal Ximenes; and it is certain that the breed became established, and began to attract the attention of foreign nations, in the seventeenth century, and that small flocks of merinoes were introduced into England and France, and were kept and tended with great care at the royal farms in these countries.

The first sheep had been brought to Australia in 1788, but the first merinoes of which any record exists were introduced from the Cape of Good Hope in 1796 by Mr. John McArthur, sometimes called the "Father of the Colony." These sheep from the Cape were some of a flock that had been presented to the Dutch Government by the King of Spain. (Oh! shade of Philip the Second!) A further introduction into Australia of the blood, since so far famed, was made in 1806 by the same Mr. McArthur, who, with the assistance and encouragement of the Privy Council, selected from the flock of George III. three rams and two ewes destined for Australia. The first flock was reared where the estate of Camden now is. From these patriarchs have sprung the greater part of the vast flocks that cover the plain lands of Australia. On cold, well-grassed, and well-watered country, Lincolns, Leicesters, and cross-breds thrive well; but on the level and ordinary country, the merino sheep to-day stands unrivalled. To him Australian wool owes its world-wide reputation. The prices paid for stud sheep are such as sound more like the ravings of a grazier who has become lunatic than sober fact. On one occasion no less than 2,200 guineas was paid for a ram; and sums varying from £500 to £1,000 are by no means infrequently given. Indeed, certain breeders of stud rams derive a large annual income from this source, their stock being a synonym for excellence all over the Australian colonies. Nor have the care and study of these great sheep-breeders been in vain. At this moment there are estimated to be in Australia and New Zealand no less than eighty-four millions of sheep, a large proportion of which would compare favourably in point of quality with any in the world. Of

this total number, New South Wales, with her vast extent of country, much of which is fit only for grazing, possesses about one-half, New Zealand one-fifth, and Victoria one-eighth. In respect of quality of wool, however, Victoria heads the list. In 1885-6 she, with her limited grazing area, possessed over ten-and-a-half millions of sheep. A well-known English writer, when he visited Australia, happily named her the "Land of the Golden Fleece," a title sufficiently justified when it is stated that from 1882 to 1884 inclusive she exported wool to the value of nearly sixty millions of pounds.

This great wool industry gives occupation, directly or indirectly, to a considerable proportion of the people scattered over the length and breadth of the country. The owner of any considerable quantity of sheep is popularly spoken of as a "squatter," a word that early superseded the older one of settler. It has often been remarked how this name squatter has passed from its English sense of contempt, until it has in Australia come to mean member of a landed aristocracy. At the present day, however, it is not a very correct term, for "squatter" properly connotes a person settled upon Crown land, for which he pays a rent often merely nominal, and upon which he depastures sheep or cattle. Nowadays, however, the encroachments of free selectors, encouraged by the policy of the various Land Acts, have forced the squatter to purchase, at all events, the best portions of his "run" (as the land so occupied is called), and the rest being "selected" or abandoned, he is, in fact, no longer a squatter, but a grazier or sheep-farmer, and prefers to be so called.

By whatever name known, the conditions of his daily life are very similar to those of his brother sheep-owners, unless, indeed, he be a Ctesus of wool, and own the cattle upon a thousand hills, in which case he employs one or more managers, and lives at ease in Sydney or Melbourne, or, mayhap, in London, and there entertains Royalty right royally. But the typical squatter, living far away on his remote station, with his wife and family, manages his sheep himself, with the assistance of an overseer and a few men. There throughout the year he musters, drafts, and generally looks after them, protecting his sheep from harm, and waging relentless war against their enemies.

In days of yore, sheep were watched by shepherds, and a very dreary, lonely life the shepherd led in the Australian back blocks. For days and days together—nay, for weeks and months—he was left to the companionship of his dogs and his sheep. But shepherding is now defunct. It was found cheaper to expend a great deal of capital on fencing, either with timber or with wire, in order to save the outlay on shepherds. Many paddocks are of enormous extent, but they are securely fenced around: and in the life of a sheep run the place formerly occupied by the shepherd is now taken by the boundary rider.

In order to keep the paddock secure, or, as it is commonly called, "sheep proof," men are appointed to go round the fences two or three times a week, carefully filling up all gaps, repairing them where they are broken down or washed away by storm waters, and keeping a sharp look-out for the tracks of dingoes and mongrel dogs in gaps and under gates. These men are called "boundary riders," and though their life is of course

monotonous, their work is not usually very severe. However, they are expected, in addition to the above duties, to assist in the more exceptional operations of station work.

The sheep has plenty of enemies. Some are wild animals, and some diseases. The squatter makes it his business to hunt down the kangaroos that eat his grass, and to trap the hated dingoes that would fain eat his sheep. These native dogs are the squatter's pest and bane; indeed, one, though naturally a humane man, informed the writer that nothing would give him greater pleasure than to get all the dingoes on his run and torture them! And it is undeniable that their conduct is of a kind eminently provoking. An occasional sheep killed and eaten would not so much matter, and among so many would scarcely be missed; but the fiendish subtlety that makes the native dog invariably select for his attacks the stud ewes at lambing time, and the diabolical malignity that induces him out of mere wantonness to bite thirty or forty in a night, are sufficient to establish in the mind of the owner a clear connection between the dingo and the Author of Evil. For this animal is indeed an artist. The half-bred mongrel, cross between wild dog and tame, will maul and mangle, gnawing at the throat and tearing out the entrails; but the dingo goes to work in business-like fashion, rounding up the sheep, and passing swiftly from one to the other, giving to each a nip and a wrench across the loins that dislocates the back, and leaves the poor brute to die in agony.

Against this enemy, then, and the eagle-hawks that attack his lambs, must the squatter wage unceasing war: he must from time to time shift the sheep from exhausted paddocks to "pastures new;" must have wells dug to water them when the creeks run dry in seasons of drought; must cut down ti-tree and other shrubs for them to eat when the grass fails; and must do a thousand things for their health and comfort. Fortunately there are at present but few diseases with which he has to contend. The once fatal "scab" is now almost a thing of the past, owing partly to efficient quarantine regulations, and partly to the invention of disinfectant compositions for dipping. These are also employed to get rid of the ticks that annoy the sheep. Dipping is, when possible, performed immediately after shearing, and consists merely in entirely immersing the sheep in the mixture, or, as it is called, "the dip." Foot-rot is occasionally troublesome, but is generally easy enough to get rid of. Besides guarding against these plagues, care must be taken to minimise the harm done by the Bathurst burr, which sticks in the wool, and by the sharp hard grass-seeds, which will work their way through wool and skin right into the sheep, to their great discomfort and injury, so that even in ordinary times the squatter's lot, though it may be a "happy," is by no means an idle one.

But the busiest time in a sheep station is the period of shearing. To collect and shear perhaps a hundred thousand sheep is no slight matter, and keeps all hands pretty busy. Yet, though there is haste there is no confusion, and considerably less fuss than there would be in shearing a few hundred in England.

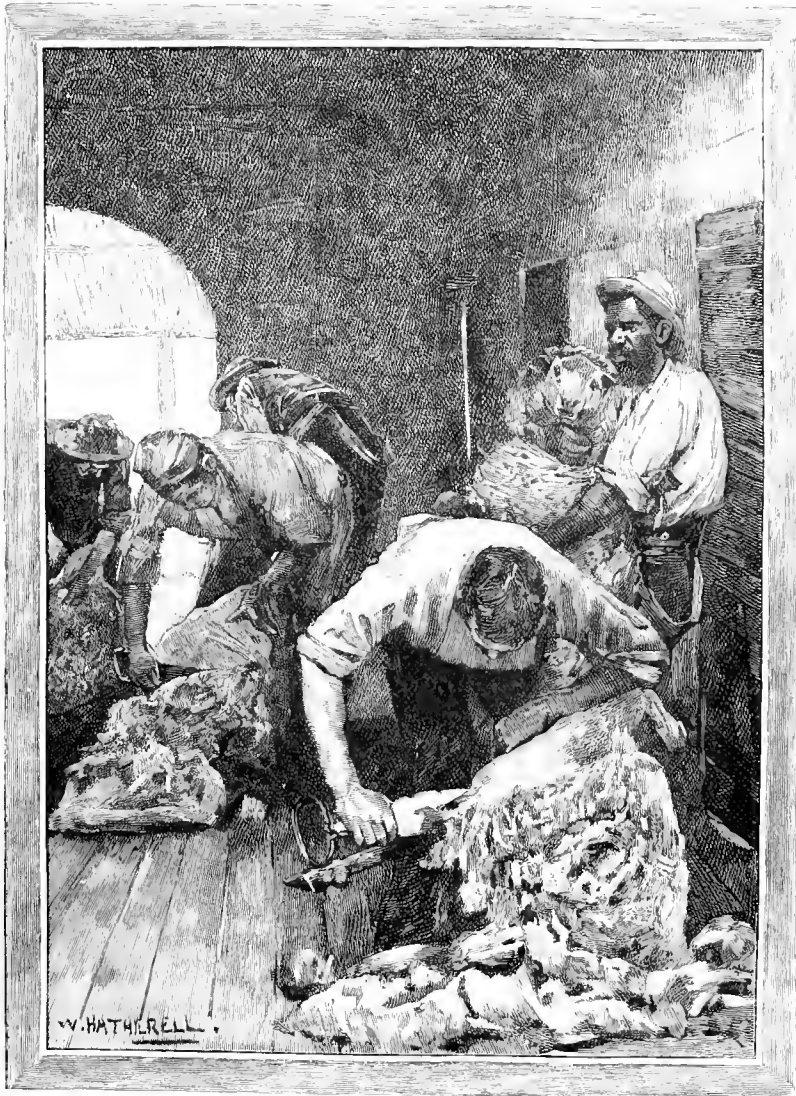
The sheep, scattered far and wide, are first mustered and driven into paddocks, probably those nearest to the shearing-shed, which have been reserved for the purpose. The next thing to do is to wash the sheep. The most effective method of doing this is by

MUSTERING SHEEP.



W. H. R. E. L. L.

means of the "hot-water wash," a rather elaborate process. The details vary according to local circumstances, but the general method is as follows:—The sheep are first run under a shower-bath, which softens the dirt in the wool. They are then shot down a slide into a large tank of warm soap-and-water, where they are rubbed and immersed.



SHEARING.

Afterwards they are held and turned over under a spout or shoot of cold water, which, falling with great force from a considerable height, literally pounds the remaining dirt out of them, and they emerge up an inclined plane with fleeces white as snow. The whole process is a sort of ovine Turkish bath, only considerably more severe, many of the sheep being so weak after it that they have to be assisted on to the

landing-stage. Afterwards they are kept three or four days in nice clean paddocks, so as to give the "yolk" time to rise in the wool, and are then shorn.

Hot-water washing is at present practised in comparatively few runs, and even cold-water washing is falling into disuse, the majority of squatters preferring to shear the wool unwashed, or, as it is technically called, "in the grease." The disadvantage of this plan is that a heavy freight has thus to be paid for the conveyance to market not merely of the wool, but of the dirt; but this is counterbalanced by saving of expense and trouble in other ways, and the manufacturers and buyers prefer wool shorn thus to that which has been washed. Very dirty wool is, however, often roughly washed or "scoured" before being sent away, fully half of its weight in dirt being thus got rid of, and a corresponding amount of freight saved. In the case of remote stations, where the cost of cartage to the port of shipment is from £2 to £6 per ton, the saving thus effected is obviously very considerable.

The shearing is not performed by the ordinary station hands, but by a class of men who make it a profession, and who travel from shed to shed during the greater part of the year. They often acquire great skill, and there are many who can shear from 100 to 150 a day. Indeed, some have actually accomplished the feat of shearing 200; but this excessive speed is not encouraged, as it is found that the sheep are roughly handled and cut in the endeavour to finish them quickly; and on many stations the men are not allowed to shear more than 100 a day. The rate of pay varies, but as a rule they are paid £1 for every hundred sheep. But out of this they have to set aside a portion as their contribution to the ration fund (for they board themselves), and to pay a man to cook for them. The life of this unlucky individual is not a happy one, and a man must be hard up indeed to go as a shearers' cook, it being the custom—if we may parody the whist-player's maxim—"when in doubt to abuse the cook." Astonishing as it may seem, the shearers are as particular about his food as a club *gourmet*, and is especially exacting in the matter of cakes.

Shearers generally work between six in the morning and six o'clock at night, suspending operations between 8 and 9 a.m. for breakfast and from noon to 1 p.m. for dinner. In addition, short intervals of rest of about a quarter of an hour's duration are allowed at about 11 a.m. and 4 p.m., for the work is terribly hard, and even when the weather is cool you may see the sweat dropping in great beads from the men's faces. Each of these short intervals, during which tea and cake are passed round, is technically called a "Smoke-Oh!"

The shearing is carried on in a substantial structure called the wool-shed. These are not all built upon precisely the same plan, but all are very similar, consisting of a main hall, with the sides opening into sheep-pens, and having at one end a large press, and a classing table surrounded by bins. The shearers first seizes a sheep from one of the pens, called the "catching pen," and sets it on end, with its fore-legs under his arm. With his right hand he then shears the belly, running up the neck, next shears down the rear, or, as it is called, the "first" side; then, turning the sheep, goes down the off, or "whipping" side, and at length the fleece lies upon the floor completely severed, but unbroken, whilst the sheep is let go into a

"counting out" pen, which the person in charge of the shed from time to time empties, marking the number shorn in his book against the shearer's name. Often the sheep are rather badly cut, for the shears are very sharp, and inflict an ugly wound. When this is the case the shearer calls for "Tar," a pot of which is brought by a boy charged with the duty, and he then dabs a mass of it upon the wound. This rough-and-ready surgery effectually stops the bleeding, and the sheep may then be let go without its being much the worse. Should a man, however, be observed to be careless and gash the sheep unduly, he will probably be summarily discharged by the person in charge of the shed. As soon as the sheep is let go, and while the shearer is seizing another, one of the "pickers up" catches the newly-severed fleece, taking care not to break it, and conveys it to the table where stands the "classer" and his assistants. Their duty is to take off the "skirt" and dirty portions of the fleece, and to direct in which of several bins it is to be placed. This depends upon the quality of the wool, but it is the fashion nowadays to make as few classes as possible, as the wool is invariably re-sorted after being sold. The portions detached are put in places by themselves, labelled "first and second pieces," "bellies," and "locks." The skirtings removed from the fleece are called "pieces," and are "first" or "second" according to quality and cleanness. The stray scraps of wool, the clippings from the sheep's legs, and the sweepings of the floor, are the "locks," and are of course the least valuable of all. The contents of the bins and receptacles are emptied from time to time into bags of stout canvas, technically called "packs," and are subjected to great pressure in the wool press. They are then sewn up with packing twine, and become the wool bales such as are seen in the wharves of the Liverpool or London docks, but they have probably been subjected to further pressure in the hold of the vessel in which they are conveyed. This is effected by means of screw-jacks, and is called "dumping." The wool is frequently insured from the time it is severed from the sheep's back, and advances are often made by woolbrokers and others upon the next year's clip. A squatter told the writer that his fortune had been made by a heavy loss. His wool had been insured to its full value, and the ship containing it being burnt in Port Phillip Bay, he obtained the full amount of the insurance. When the wool sent home at the time reached the market, the prices had fallen, and only a small sum was obtained for it. To the squatter it made all the difference between bankruptcy and solvency, and he is now one of the richest men in the colonies.

As has been already mentioned, the merino sheep is the one almost invariably kept in Australia for wool-producing purposes, on account of the superior quality of its fleece. Another reason for its popularity is its extreme hardiness; it will live where a large sheep would die. In a country where water is scarce and droughts prevail, this is a great consideration. "Any country," said an experienced squatter, "will carry sheep, provided you give them enough of it, *i.e.*, provided there be actually sufficient food, though the sheep have to travel long distances to get it. It is only very good country that will carry a sheep to the acre all the year round; much will not carry a sheep to ten acres. The great error that is made is that of overstocking, but the temptations thereto are very great. Should he be blessed with good seasons, the

squatter obtains the wool from twice as many sheep as his run will fairly carry, and rapidly becomes rich; but should bad seasons come, or the much-dreaded drought set in, he will lose two-thirds of his sheep, and be ruined. Sheep-farming under such circumstances becomes gambling." Many stories are told of the freaks of fortune in connection with squatting. One man at the end of a long drought buys a valuable run for a mere song. Immediately upon the conclusion of the bargain, the wished-for rain has come and quadrupled its value. Another has invested his all in a station, and after pluckily holding on to it through a succession of killing seasons, is

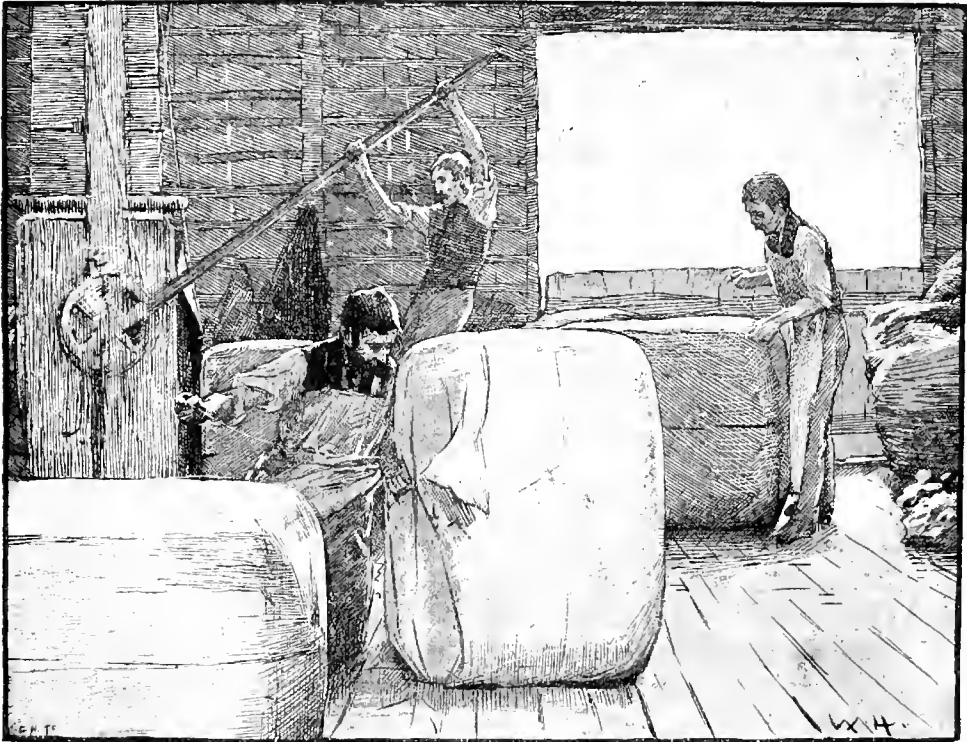
at length compelled to sell for a fourth of its value. No sooner is delivery given than the drought breaks with torrents of rain, and a season ensues such as exceeds all previous years. The buyer is a made man, the seller a beggar. Readers who live in England, where rain is usually only too abundant, can hardly imagine the longing for it that the struggling station-owner feels. He scans the horizon for a likely cloud a dozen times a day; he hopefully notes even the smallest sign of a change of weather; he consults barometer and thermometer; he literally trembles with anxiety as he lies awake at night, and listens to the pit-pat upon the corrugated iron roof of a few drops of rain from some passing cloud, light and fleecy; and when this is succeeded by the ominous stillness



SORTING.

that shows that the hoped-for shower has passed away, he turns over with a stifled groan to think of his sheep dying by hundreds, and beggary staring him in the face. In the event of rain, the gauge is measured with the greatest accuracy. Every point is reckoned. Has there been a good fall, everyone about the station beams with satisfaction. Does the drought continue, each might have lost a relative, and been left out of the will, so lugubrious is his expression. The sheep lie down and die by dozens. The cattle stagger to the creek, and going knee-deep into the mud, are too weak to drag themselves to the bank, and gradually sink and perish, whilst the eagle-hawks peck out the eyes, and the dingoes gnaw the heaving flanks, of the still living beast, whose piteous lowings resound down the gully. The pure bush air is poisoned with the stench of carcasses. The kangaroos, too weak to hop away, stare hopelessly at the passing traveller. For miles and miles his poor jaded horse carries him over paddocks bare as the

road. All nature seem to gasp for water, water! Then comes the rain, so long hoped for, wished for, prayed for. What a change ensues! The long grass almost hides the posts and rails of the fences. The sheep, or what remains of them, run strong and lusty as deer. The horse, no longer jaded and stumbling, can hardly be controlled by his rider; and, unless the latter look to it, will send him high in air with a succession of flying buck jumps. It is hard riding now to head the mob of horses that it is desired to secure. The squatter's face beams; he rubs his hands and writes to town for a new



PACKING.

saddle for Sam, a rifle for Dick, and dresses for his wife and the girls, and then falls to scanning the last reports of the wool sales.

Wool is sold by the pound, and varies from 13d. for the best, to 3d. for the worst, kinds. The highest price ever reached for any considerable amount was 23½d.; but perhaps 13d. may be considered a fair average price for really good greasy wool. Considering the enormous number of pounds sent to market by even a small station, it can be easily estimated what a difference will be made by a rise or fall in its value, even of a fraction of a penny. It will often make all the difference between a year of contentment and good hope, and a year of annoyance, anxiety, and desperate efforts to make ends meet. Accordingly, the reader will not find it difficult to understand the anxiety with which the squatters follow the wool sales, both in London and in the Colonial capitals.

Nor is the scene itself devoid of interest even to the mere onlooker. Ranged in line along a vast hall are bales upon bales of wool, distinguished by certain cabalistic marks intelligible only to the initiated. For days before, the wool buyers—experts from England, France, America, and half the countries of Europe—have been going their rounds among the bales, plucking out small particles of wool, scrutinising its fibre, feeling its fineness and quality, and entering in notebooks the result of their observations, and the price that they consider it safe to give for that particular sample. The sale day arrives. The auctioneer mounts his pulpit. Lot after lot is put up as bid for, the bidder rarely exceeding the sum set down by him as his outside limit. Often lots are passed in, the wool not realising the reserved price put upon it by the squatter or shipper. Though the sale is held in London, in a few hours its results will be flashed along a hundred wires, and will be known in remote stations in the centre of Australia, on the sandy Darling plains, and in the far off "Never Never Country" of Queensland. In the actual wool sold, however, the owner of the sheep upon whose backs it grew feels little or no interest, for though many squatters still send their wool home at their own risk, it is often sold even whilst upon the sheep's back, and passes through the hands of half-a-dozen middlemen—wool-brokers, stock and station agents, and squatting companies—before it is put up to auction in London.

Wool, although the principal, is by no means the only considerable article of export that Australia obtains from her sheep. Meat preserving is extensively carried on at Ramorney, in New South Wales, and at the Lakes Creek, near Rockhampton, in Queensland, and also at other places; and large shipments of frozen mutton have been made, some of which have commanded good prices. Both these industries, however, require development, and it will probably be long ere they approach wool in importance. Still, they have made rapid strides of late, and Australia contributes her quota to feed as well as to clothe the Old World.

The merino is a much smaller animal than either the Lincoln or Leicester sheep, and accordingly the joints of Australian look poor and small beside those of English mutton; but the flavour is very sweet, and most people who have "tasted and tried" prefer the former. The wild open life of the Australian sheep gives it a "gamey" taste that almost suggests venison. On the whole, it is more like Welsh than any other British variety of mutton. In order to judge fairly of Australian mutton, the visitor should taste it during the winter months, at which time it can be kept sufficiently long to become tender. In the summer, owing to the great heat, and the absence of ice chests and cool larders, it has to be eaten too soon to be pleasant, either to palate or to teeth. Indeed, the great prevalence of decayed teeth among comparatively young persons in Australia may be partly due to this cause. In Queensland the writer has frequently seen a sheep grazing in the paddock at 4 p.m. and on the table in the shape of mutton-chops at 6 p.m. Needless to say, these chops were a terrible strain upon the molars, and a diet of them would soon qualify any one for pulpit, bar, or stage, if muscular strength of jaw were the only qualification necessary for those professions. It is this habit, arising partly from necessity, partly from carelessness, of eating meat too soon after killing, that has done much to get Australian mutton a bad name. Yet hundreds of carcasses of

THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF VICTORIA.

A Pastoral Arcadia—The Grampians—Mounts Sturgeon and Abrupt—In the Good Old Days—The "Chicago of the West"—Volcanic Caves—Hamilton College—Springtime—Redruth—The Wannon Falls—The Nigretta Cascades—Coleraine—Australia Felix—Casterton—The Hentys—Merino Downs—Market-Day at Hamilton—The Journey's End.



WALLABY SHOOTING ON THE GRAMPIANS.

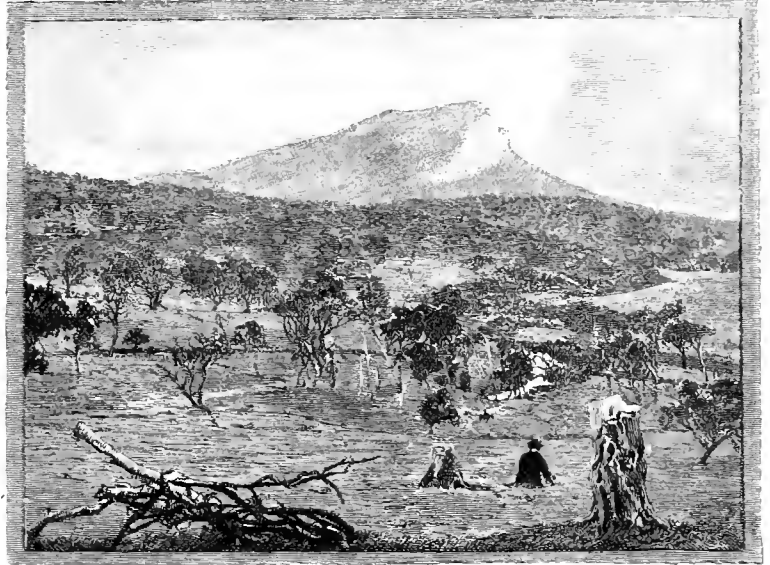
THE tourist bent on forsaking the luxurious comfort of his Melbourne hotel for the bracing exhilaration of a month in the Western District has choice of many routes and modes of travel. Time and leisure may offer him the old-fashioned independence of a buggy and a pair of strong ponies, with the resultant freedom from beaten tracks; or immunity from sea-sickness may suggest to him a delightful coasting voyage by almost daily steamers round Cape Otway, to Warrnambool, Belfast, and the "Cradle of Victoria," the old whaling town of Portland; or, choosing the more practical railway, and taking on his way the historic towns of Ballarat and Ararat, he will find in the latter an appropriate point of departure—appropriate because he will then the more readily realise that he is leaving the land of gold and labour and commerce for the kingdom of wool and wealth, of pleasure and plenty.

The Western District of Victoria is a pastoral Arcadia. Its mountains, rivers, lakes, and forests combine to make it at once a Paradise for the painter and an Eden for the keeper of sheep. Moreover, Cain and Abel may here contrive to live at peace. The variety of the soil and the amplitude of its boundaries leave no provocation for the slaughter of the shepherd by the tiller of the ground. Contrary to general Australian conditions, farming and sheep-breeding can here co-exist, and the squatter and the free-selector can work hand in hand and side by side. By a happy inspiration, the district was earlier called Australia Felix, and fitly is it described as the Garden of Victoria.

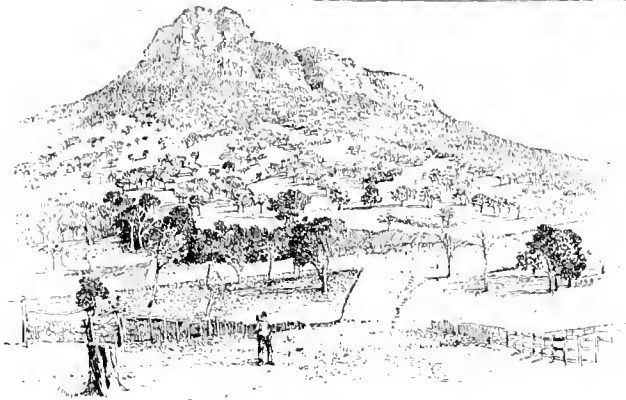
Two trains only in the twenty-four hours run from Ararat, through Hamilton, to Portland, a total distance of 120 miles. One is a night train, by which the journey of sixty-four miles to Hamilton is performed almost entirely in darkness. The other leaves at half-past one in the afternoon, and, as a capital luncheon is to be had during the stoppage at Ararat, the tourist will be in the temper for enjoying the three hours and a half of that "slow and safe" rate of twenty miles an hour which

the Victorian trunk lines never exceed and seldom attain. Railway accidents ought certainly to be rare under such conditions, as indeed they are.

Half-an-hour will suffice to leave the great gold-bearing quartz formations of the dividing range well behind, and the line then leads out into the plain where the rivers flow no longer to the Murray, but direct to the sea. Trending southwards from the huge bulk of Mount William, the formidable barrier of the Grampian Range hems in this plain with a wall which seems to run parallel with the railway at some twenty miles distance from it. Every mile deepens the green of the verdant pasture with which the



MOUNT ABRUPT.



MOUNT STURGEON.

plain is clothed, and the increasing frequency of the sheep and cattle bespeak our continuous approach to the dominions of the wool-kings. Bolder and more rugged loom the Grampian heights against the western sky, and as the now slanting sun forsakes the deep sapphire of the noon for the paler opal

of the coming eve, the lower margin of his azure field is bordured with an ever-deepening glow of amber-gold. A crimson and purple transparency of keen serrated peaks, whose vivid, clear-cut edges and points have replaced the grim bulks of the range that lately obscured them, completes the harmony of the colour chord, as a middle note between the golden dominant of the distant sky and the rich emerald of the near pastures at our feet. It is the famous Sierra Range, so named by the Peninsular veteran, Major Mitchell, who, with the youthful

memories of Castille and Nevada still fresh within him, thus baptised its saw-like outline.

But the colour-pageant soon loses the brilliancy which the distance lends it; the plain is lost in bosky, low, undulating downs; and the traveller becomes aware that his route is rapidly converging upon the line of the range itself. Suddenly, after passing Glen Thompson, it is evident that while the majesty and height of the more marked mountains is increasing, he is bearing down more directly upon them, until at last, like Boaz and Jachin, the two great pillars of Mount Sturgeon and Mount Abrupt stand sentinel on either side of the gap through which he imagines he must pass. As if unable to proceed further, the train comes to a sudden halt almost against the vertical wall of their precipitous sides, and the tourist, if he would not miss some of the most imposing scenery in the colony, should disembark at the mountain station of Dunkeld, leaving his Hamilton destination to wait for him till the morrow.

Looking up at Mount Sturgeon and Mount Abrupt from the primitive little village of Dunkeld, where the ancient gum-trees are still left growing in the middle of the tracks which do duty for streets, one is apt to fancy them much higher than they really are, by reason of their precipitous walls rising almost sheer from the intervening plains. Their heights are variously estimated, but that of Sturgeon may be given as a little over 2,000, and that of Abrupt a little under 3,000 feet.

Sturgeon is the outermost buttress of the range, one line of which comes with it to a sudden termination. Indeed, it is generally supposed that it was this circumstance which suggested at once to Major Mitchell its name of "Mount Abrupt," and that the later settlers have strangely interchanged the two appellations. Its most marked feature is the finial which faces the south, and presents an inaccessible escarpment, some 700 feet high, in clustered columns of whitish-grey silicious slate. Lighted by the glow of the early morning sun, these columns gleam with the brilliance of the illuminated pipes of some cathedral organ. From the foot of this escarpment, a graceful slope of the boulders and *débris* of many thousands of years has become embedded in a rich loamy soil, covered with fern thicket and mossy patch, and clothed with a shady forest of green gums and graceful wattle and acacia, till its lower definition is lost where it merges into the woods and pastures of the plain.

In a walk from Dunkeld soon after sunrise the two mountains may be seen at their best. The gap between them is occupied by a peculiar circular basaltic mound known as the Little Hill. Through the gap and round the hill flows the meandering rivulet known as the Wannon, which, gathering force from the numerous creeks and mountain streams on its way, will rejoice the tourist later on with the beautiful cascades at Nigretta and the majestic thunder of the falls at Redruth.

The Little Hill will lead a good climber by a fairly easy ascent of some seven or eight miles to the verge of the precipice at the summit of Mount Sturgeon. The lively brown wallaby will frequently bound across his track, and the snake may often lurk at his feet. Among the gigantic boulders near the top he may capture the burrowing ant-eating porcupine, though if perchance he place it for a moment on the

stoniest ground, it will tax all his strength to drag it from the instantaneous burrow in which it will defiantly embed itself. Scaling the upper crags, in ravines that are at times gloomy and awesome from the impenetrable canopy of the overhanging shadows cast by the beetling rocks, he may be startled anon by the whizzing whirl and flutter of the carrion eagle-hawk, angry that the solitude of its eyrie should be disturbed by the venturesome intruder.

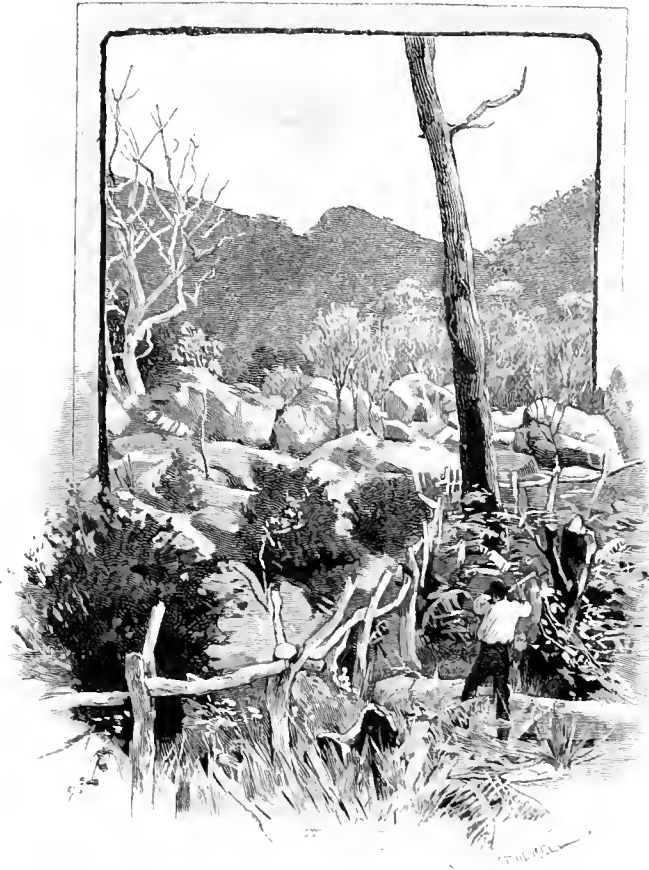
But the view from the plateau at the summit will amply reward the climb. Eastward, to the "utmost purple rim" of the horizon, stretches a limitless prairie of waving grass, green now in the early spring, but parched and withered at midsummer by reason of its smaller rainfall. The rain-bearing continental winds, checked by the great Sierra Range, precipitate nearly all their moisture upon the Victoria Valley to the west, and looking down upon this beautiful vale, locked in on the western side by the parallel Victoria Range, the eye is delighted by evergreen swards, embellished with park-like clusters of the beauteous blackwood, acacia, and tree-fern, and mirrored in little chains of freshwater lakes and cattle-carrying expanses of marsh or reedy swamp. About five-and-twenty miles to the south-west a mirage may sometimes help to render visible the church spires and college towers of the "Athens of the West," the town of Hamilton; and if time be not lost in descent, a hurried dinner at Dunkeld may enable the tourist to join the evening train to that important Western centre.

In the good old days when "Cobb" was king, Hamilton was the coaching centre of the Western District, the half-way station of the overland mail-route from Melbourne to Adelaide. Two resultant characteristics remain: an unusual superiority in the appointments of its substantial inns and coaching-stables, and a passion, stronger than is usual even in Australia, for keeping and driving the best horses and buggies. The soundest roads in the colony converge to the town from every direction, and by whichever one of them it be approached, the traveller feels, as he sights his picturesque goal, that his journey is at last bringing him to the restful haven where he would be.

The enterprising energy of a town then barely a dozen years old, the wealth of pastoral and agricultural produce of which it was the emporium, and its aspirations to become the metropolis of the district, led Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, some twenty-five years ago, to bestow on Hamilton the appellation it long retained of the "Chicago of the West." But, unlike its American namesake, the stability of its life needed no passing through the fire: brick and stone, not wood, were its buildings; and, with a population of 4,000, with lofty church steeples and ambitious school and college towers—all set on hills that they may not be hid—it rejoices now in its more worthy title of the "Athens of the West."

Let us look at it from its Acropolis, the college lawn on its north-western hill. It is a bright sunny morning in the early spring, and the air is crisp and clear, yet cool and fresh with the moisture here held in suspension all the year through. When evening comes, the saturation will be dispersed in the gentle dews and showers that sustain all the year round the brilliance of the emerald grasses. The present effect is to intensify and illumine the lovely cobalt blue of the Grampians and Sierras, with Sturgeon and

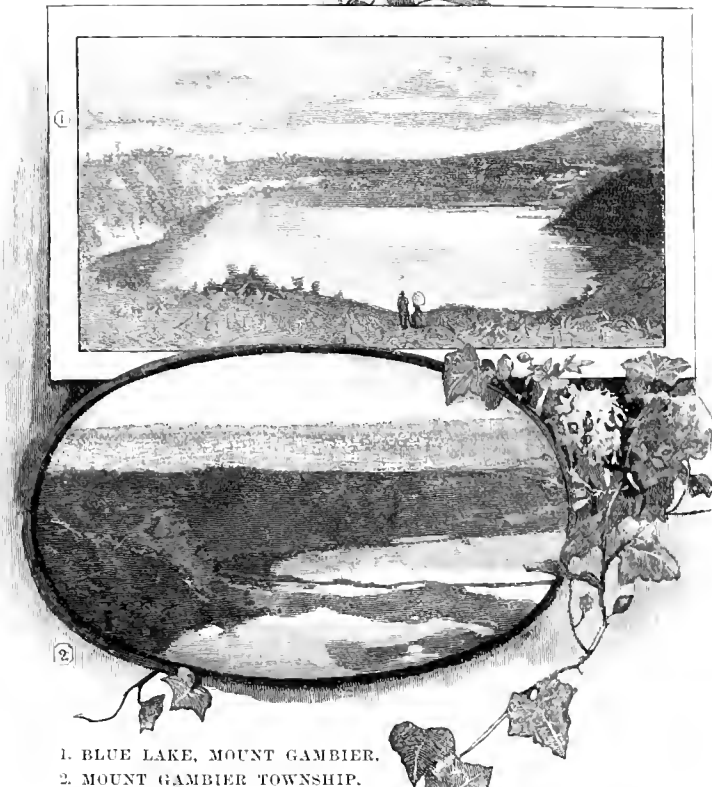
Abrupt closing in the wooded panorama on the eastern horizon. The lawn at our feet is bespangled with the golden stars of the wild *ranunculus*, and, as it slopes to the village, we may fancy ourselves once more in an English meadow—a “verdant mead, with buttercups ablaze.” Sweet is it, too, “with the breath of kine in the meadows;” for the town herd is leisurely rambling up the slope, on its way back to the common. Here we see a bit of the old “mark system” of Saxon England: every



ENTRANCE TO THE GRAMPIANS.

villager has his little patch of cultivation, and from every wicket-gate on the wayside the milkmaid is sending her cow to graze with its fellows. And all the village is fragrant with the curling blue reek of the gum-wood, floating dreamily in thin gauzy cloudlets from every cottage chimney-stack. And across the light hazy veil of the valley, over the tops of the evergreen thickets of myall and booby-aloes golden glories of wattle and buttercup-pastures gleam in the sunshine. Southwards the grassy knolls and rounded slopes of Mount Pierrepont are dotted here and there with rose-trellised white houses, and through the rich black volcanic soil of the intervening marshy flats

meanders and winds the stream characteristically named by its Scotch "gossips" the Grange "burn." Away to the south the dead giant volcano, Mount Napier, sleeps with his purple head in the clouds, 1,500 feet above the sea. Far and wide in every direction his gigantic boulders and streams of lava have flowed. To a distance of forty or fifty miles the beds of ashes were showered and scattered from his summit, before the last great molten flood closed the vent of his terrible crater. On his north-western slope, at the village of Byaduk, about fifteen miles from Hamilton, wonderful volcanic caves exist, almost at the



1. BLUE LAKE, MOUNT GAMBIER.
2. MOUNT GAMBIER TOWNSHIP.

foot of a gigantic ravine, paved and walled, for a distance of a dozen miles, right up to the very lip of his crater, with cyclopean thunderstones.

These caves have not been thoroughly explored by reason of the mephitic vapours of their more remote interiors, but the stalactitic pillars and stalagmitic pedestals nearer to their entrances are of exceeding and fantastic beauty, and present the familiar resemblance of the column-clustered aisles of a Gothic cathedral. Deep beds of guano cover large areas on the floors, the deposits of countless generations of birds through pre-historic periods of time. For long distances on the high road from Byaduk to Macarthur the driver will hear his buggy rolling with a hollow, muffled, rumbling sound over the thick basaltic crust which bridges with its roof undiscovered cavities of vast extent in the ground beneath. The lava sheet has cooled and hardened into

solid rock, while the underground water-currents have gradually dispersed the beds of ashes and scoria upon which it rested. A similar cave-formation exists on a more magnificent scale at Narracoorte, in the east of South Australia. Neither at Narracoorte nor at Byaduk has the excavating water worked so near to the surface as to make the roof thin enough to result in collapse: but between Hanover Bay and Perth, in Western Australia, there are several acres of land covered with high sandstone pillars of singularly grotesque form. Mr. De la Poer Wall, who furnishes this information, compares one of the caves to "a vast unroofed cathedral, lined with massive pillars forty feet high," and another to "pedestals supporting the ruins of statues, in solemn and lonely grandeur." In the centuries to come, the traveller will probably pass through similar wonders on the Byaduk and Macarthur road.

Macarthur, a pretty little township, has suffered by the loss of its more melodious native name—"Emmeralla." The river of that name flows past it, and debouches into Portland Bay, the town being about half-way between Hamilton and the sea. In the remote neighbourhood is Mount Eccles, or Eeles, an extinct volcano very similar to Mount Gambier. Like that mount, it is extremely rich in a perfectly black volcanic soil, from which the free selectors supply Hamilton and its outlying districts with enormous red potatoes. These remarkable tubers have been known to measure thirteen inches long, with a string-test girth of twenty-one inches. Like Gambier, Mount Eccles has a perfectly circular ultramarine crater-lake of almost unfathomable central depth, the concave slopes of its basin being girt from margin to crater-lip with bush herbage of grass and fern and umbrageous forest and thicket. The sides of the mountain in their upper heights are almost impassable with the chaos of gigantic crags and boulders. Among their recesses are dark and awesome caves, wherein of old the aboriginal blacks held their inaccessible fastnesses, breaking the legs of the white settlers' sheep to prevent their straying back to the flocks, and devouring them at their leisure, and otherwise displaying all the villainies of mountain banditti, until they succumbed in a bloody battle of extermination. One of the features of Mount Gambier, by the way, is its blue lake, of which we shall attempt no description, for to do justice to its beauties it would be necessary to break into poetry.

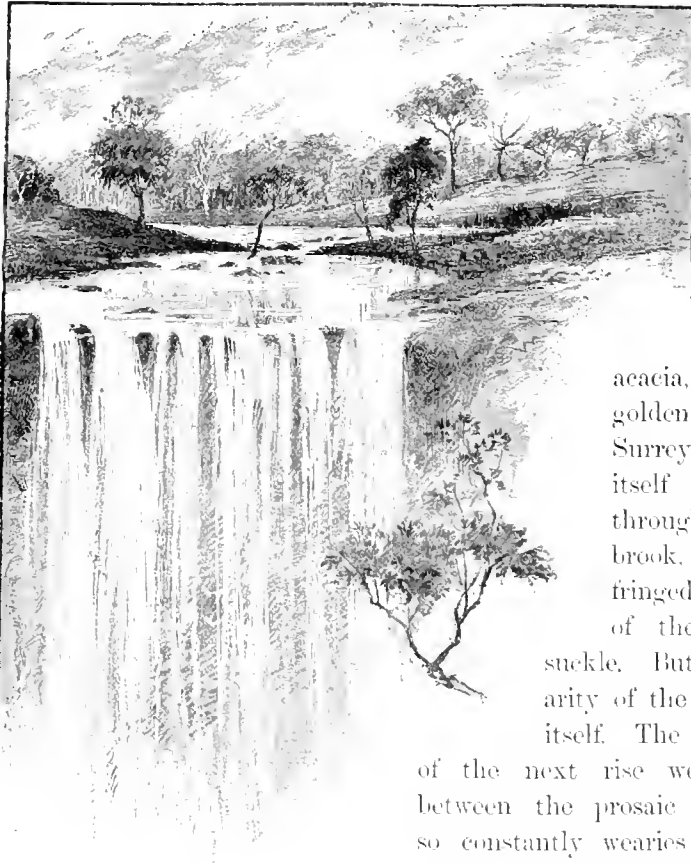
We must return for a moment to the Hamilton College Lawn. The College, let it be said, is fulfilling the high ambition of its founders, and it speaks volumes for the liberal and lofty aims of its original projectors that the sum of £10,000 should have been employed by a local pastoral directorate in building and establishing what was designed to be the great Public School of the Western District. A furlong lower down, on the townward slope, stands the parallel foundation of the Ladies' College, loyally named, after the Princess of Wales, the Alexandra College, and built at a cost of about £6,000. It is an Australian whim to call most upper schools "colleges," the term "State School" being reserved for the elementary first-grade schools provided everywhere free by the Government, and managed by the Education Department. Of these elementary, Hamilton possesses one of the largest and best, where the lower middle-classes may obtain all the commercial education they require.

The College precincts are sacred to the classic muse and the omnipresent bush-magpie. Here he may warble all day long on the liquid, mellifluous notes of his Doric flute, fit pipe indeed for academic groves. Proud he seems of his high-sounding title of *gymnorhina leuconota*, and with melodious industry he "tunes his supple song" to deserve his happy leuconotic reputation—sweetest and brightest, most cheery and sociable of all Australian birds. The little magpie-lark has also his collegiate ambition; but his more elegant and graceful figure remains in modest silence by the hedgerow in the outskirts. Here, too, the "careful robin eyes the delver's toil," and as he snatches the worm from the gardener's furrow, he turns to us a crimson-scarlet breast that gleams in the sun beside the golden buttercups like a living coal. The hues of his English cousin would pale beside him ineffectual. In the primeval gums overhead, and on the more modern apple-trees of the cottage gardens at the foot of the slope, multitudinous swarms of parrots hold their shrill parliament in defiance of all collegiate decorum or control. The town-herd has disappeared to its pasture, the town has finished its breakfast, the fires have died on the hearthstones, and the scent of the blue reeks from the gum-wood has given place to the opening odour of the sweetbriar fences and the delicious perfume of the copses of golden wattle. In English meadows it is the mayflower and the hawthorn that sweeten "the breezy call of incense-breathing morn." In Australia every native shrub and tree is redolent of balmy perfume, but the golden wattle is still the hawthorn-king of the perfumed realm. The Poet Laureate has painted the hues of an English spring-time in four lines of unsurpassed and undying colour. It remained for an Australian poet, loving landscape and nature with a Tennysonian love, to limn in one verse the vernal beauty and balmy breath of the Australian breezy upland:—

" In the spring, when the wattle-bough trembles
 "Twixt shadow and shine,
 And each dew-laden air-draft resembles
 A sweet draught of wine!"

Poor Adam Lindsey Gordon—exile, roughrider, poet, and suicide—tuned his harp in the sequestered valley of Coleraine, twenty miles from Hamilton. The breath of his music has sweetened a continent.

Two or three delightful days may be spent in thus admiring the Western metropolis and its surroundings, leaving the greatest lion of all, the Wannon Falls, for the day of departure. The completion of the present railway route, by way of the cereal plains and mallee scrub beyond Stawell and Horsham, has deprived modern travellers of the charming drive thither, although if they would see Cavendish, which lies some sixteen miles north of Hamilton, they cannot "train it" thither if they would. But the coach no longer runs to the Falls, for it was only "the mails" which made it pay: but the tourist will not suffer, for he can hire the far preferable ponies and buggy, and have them sent back from Casterton when his drive is done. Starting early after breakfast, a two-mile trot will carry us past open common-land, still dotted with a few isolated giant weeping gums, stately as English oaks, to the top of the hill near the racecourse.



THE WANNON FALLS.

map, and to force the road along it, through marshes and rivers, up hill and down dale, over precipices, if they insist on getting in the way, but still, *quocunque modo*, along that ruled straight line.

The road, nevertheless, is a capital one for the practical purpose of "going," and over the fences the thickly-timbered, undulating, and deep-grassed country is picturesque enough. A vast stretch of it is soon visible as we rise higher—a rolling, waving, blue, billowy sea of rounded gum-tree tops, crested with the saffron foam of their feathery vernal leaflets, and merging miles away into the bright fleecy clouds where the distant pearly hills vanish into the horizon.

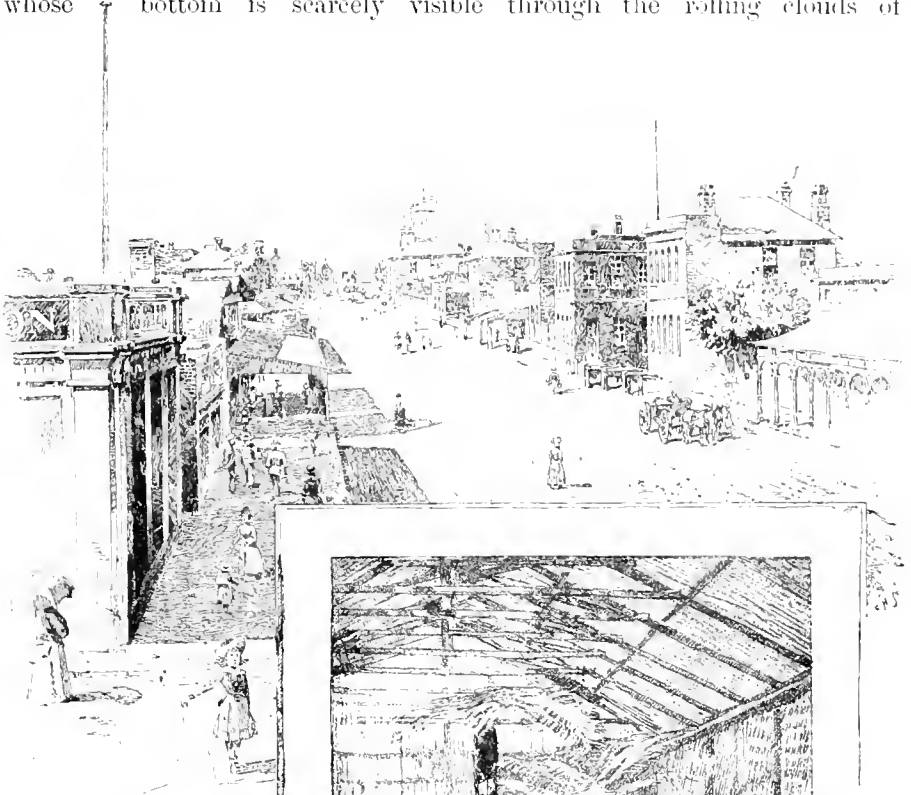
Redruth is soon reached, and so suddenly that we seem to drop down upon the roofs of the little hamlet as soon as we sight it. There is a capital inn both for man and for beast, and the beer, the luncheons, and the dinners enjoyed by the numerous picnic-parties who rendezvous here are the pride and boast of the district. So we sample their quality, leave our horses with the stable-boys, and wander away to the Falls.

Half-a-mile upwards goes the track, over smooth, marshy meadows, gleaming with

Very English the landscape still remains. The weary monotony of the everlasting miles of "post and rail" fencing has not yet obtruded itself, but the paddocks and cultivated fields and roadside are marked out and delimited by bushy green hedges of wattle and prickly acacia, fragrant now with abundance of golden bloom. The road, too, like a Surrey lane, has wound and entwined itself at its own sweet will down through the hollows and across the brook, until it reaches a mossy fern-fringed dell, thick with tangled copse of the sweetbriar rose and honeysuckle. But the merciless Roman rectilinearity of the Government survey soon asserts itself. The scenery changes, and at the top

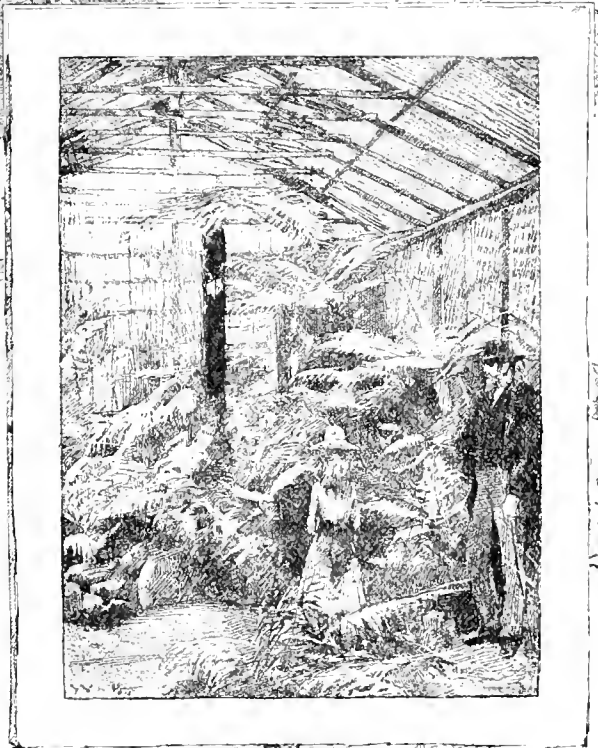
of the next rise we enter the long straight line between the prosaic rail fence, which in Australia so constantly wearies the landscape painter's heart. "Rule a straight line," says the Victorian surveyor. And the road-making idiosyncrasy of the Land Department is to rule a straight line on the office

the ruby stars of millions of tiny little sun-dews, past the low tumuli which mark the blacks' burying-ground, and with the brambles and gum-trees and black-woods all around alive with rosellas and minahs, and green parrakeets and native robins. Suddenly the shrill chorus of the feathered concert is drowned in the deafening roar of the cataract. The grassy sward drops without warning into the Titanic abyss of an immense circular chasm whose bottom is scarcely visible through the rolling clouds of purple spray that float unceasing upwards from the boiling foam in the pool beneath. We are on a level with the smooth, unrippled current of the river, as it glides swiftly with placid and unruffled course, between its greenmeadow margins, to an unseen horse-shoe undercut basaltic precipice.



HORSHAM.

Then, with a sudden curvilinear leap, the waters fling themselves bodily, in majestic thunder, over the precipice into the swirling cauldron of turmoil a hundred feet below. So vigorous is the leap that an easy passage is left for us under the great arch of the cataract, over the iron-stone boulders at the foot of the precipice. If the bank be followed a short distance down from the Falls, a winding ledge will discover

BUSH HOUSE
BOTANICAL GARDENS,
HORSHAM.

a path down the inner wall of the pool to the level of the floods. Cyclopean crags and boulders of dolerite strew the bed of the gulf; the tenderest ferns and the softest mosses and gayest lichens adorn their water-worn outlines; from the pulverised deposits of thousands of years in their crevices spring the wattle and the heather, the scented sassafras, the bushy blackwood, and the sapling gum. Above, around, and between them, the freshening clouds of foam are arched by the morning sun into magic fairy rainbows—a glorious temple of the gods, carved in the everlasting hills, and with the roar of the eternal thunder ever raging over all.

An eminent geologist, Dr. J. E. Taylor, thus accounts for the building of this temple:—"The water," he says, "comes over a harder stratum of volcanic rock, which has covered up beds of volcanic ashes. The latter are softer, and the spray of the water is constantly eating them away, and is thus undercutting the overlying bed of hard rock. This is then broken off in fragments, and the huge masses in the river-bed beneath were all detached in this way. Thus the Falls are constantly working themselves backwards, and the whole of the river-gorge, three miles in length, has been eaten away by the slowly retreating cataract. The volcanic lavas and ashes can be easily studied in the section beneath the Falls. Embedded in volcanic ashes we see the trunks of partly-petrified and partly-carbonised trees, which were killed by the hot ashes descending from the crater of Mount Napier, a dozen miles away." This opinion is confirmed by what occurred not long since in New Zealand, where forests and vegetation were overwhelmed by hot ashes to a radius in some instances of nearly fifty miles, and subsequently buried beneath the lava-flood.

Before resuming our drive, we secure a couple of saddle-horses at the inn, and ride up the river-bank five or six miles to the Nigretta Cascades. The pretty winding reedy bed of the stream is not unlike the country-side around the Cumberland rivulets, on the road from Keswick to the foot of Ulleswater; but the Cascade, when we reach it, more resembles the peat-stained yellow foam of an autumn spate in a highland burn. Less majestic than the Redruth Cataract, but of infinite and more varied beauty, are the Nigretta Cascades. The boulders have reversed their situation: they shatter the torrent in the upper bed into a hundred churning freshets, which are again converged by the rocky walls on to the irregular jagged ridges of a line of broken precipices of various heights, over which they rush and roar into an eddying whirlpool in the open free current below. The Wannon has travelled here, in a semicircular bend, about forty miles in circumference, from its head-waters at the foot of the Sierras. Little brooklet as we there saw it, its narrow bed, "with many a curve and shallow," is powerless to control the spring floods of its wide basin: and if the traveller had time to visit Cavendish, about half-way in the bend, he would be delighted with lake-like sheets of limpid water, bright and clear and still, recalling to his memory the islet-dotted expanses of the English Westmorland.

But the noon is past, our buggy-ponies are rested, and luncheon is ready at Redruth, in time for an early start for Coleraine. Away over the graceful bridge of wooden piles, and by a gentle ascent from the valley, we emerge, under a hot afternoon sun, on to an apparently endless straight track of sandy yellow highway. It is well wooded on all

sides, and although it is four chains wide, yet in the distance the branching boughs of the huge eucalypti seem to meet overhead. In the far vista a broad, shallow sheet of bright sky-blue water lies across our track, and the leafy eucalyptic arch is mirrored in its bosom. Ferns and flowers and feathery foliage line its long margin in fairyland profusion. Eagerly our little ponies hurry onward to lave their heated and dusty hoofs in its cool depths. Rapidly we seem to be nearing it, when suddenly it vanishes, almost from beneath our very feet. It is the familiar optical delusion of the desert mirage, always to be seen on this long sandy track in a rarefied atmosphere.

There is no variation in the country for some ten miles, and then the change is very sudden, as we drop into the water-shed of the Koroite Creek, an important arm of the Wannon. The heavily-timbered plateau is replaced by clean-shorn, hillyocky downs, in outward appearance very like the chalky barrows of Sussex, but with a different interior anatomy. Presently the suggested likeness is strengthened by a feature similar to the famous Devil's Dyke near Brighton. For we get a bird's-eye view, as we round a dangerous steep bend in the road, of a wide-spreading, richly-grassed expanse of flat meadow-land below us, with the creek winding through it, and the village of Coleraine—in its normal condition of *dolce far niente*—basking lazily in the sunshine in the hollow of the hills. Approaching the village, it is seen that the surrounding hills enclose a long oval grazing-marsh, well watered, not only by the creek, but by numerous deep “water-holes,” or ponds, the location of these, like the course of the river, being indicated by venerable white-stemmed weeping gums, under whose shade the cattle ruminant in drowsy clusters, as under ancient elms in Surrey park-lands. Picturesque “bits” the painter will find everywhere, green as the Cheshire meadows, and with cattle groups that seem like the cows in Sydney Cooper's pictures. Here it was that the veteran Australian *paysagiste*, Louis Buvelôt, found the subject for the picture which is one of the chief ornaments of the Melbourne Gallery; and here have been celebrated the “green fields of Coleraine” in song by the *genius loci*, Lindsey Gordon.

We are in the very heart of Australia Felix, where its first explorer, Major Mitchell, described his delight in “the soft sward of the emerald meadows, gay with innumerable golden flowers of a species of wild ranunculus.” The Major's visit was in 1836, when the aboriginal and the kangaroo held undisputed dominion. The succeeding half-century has witnessed the consolidation of the wool-king's empire, and these are his provinces. In the village we find the bullock-dray loaded with wool-packs, or with faggots of brown wattle-bark, richest of all cuticles in tannin. Thus the bullock browses in the copse that will turn his hide to leather, just as the eagle “wings the shaft that quivers in his heart.” The showers in which the young spring duckling revels hasten also the growth of the succulent green pea, and both will be eaten together.

Fifty miles is a mere Sabbath-day's journey for Australian bush horses, and our ponies will carry us cheerfully over the twenty miles ahead to Casterton. The drive is through the famous “Downs of Iramoo.” By many tourists it is reckoned the finest in Victoria, while some have compared it to a journey in the Highlands. Certainly

of hill and dale, down and valley, purple peak and sloping brae-side, there is abundant variety. Still, there is no heather, no piney waste of deer-forest, no granite gorge of fruitless wilderness, but everywhere and on all hands the rich deep chocolate soil, prolific in grassy pasture, and nourishing the wool on the backs of thousands of sheep. Generous, too, is the land to the hand of the tiller; if he do but "tickle it with a hoe" it will "laugh with a harvest."

The descent to Casterton is almost as steep as that to Coleraine. But the verdure of the latter entitled it to its Irish appellation, while Casterton is more distinctively Caledonian. It is a straggling Scotch borough, where the Wannon, with many a swirling eddy and deep trout-pool and pebbly shallow, delivers its tribute wave to the Glenelg

River. We have reached the limit of Australia Felix, the last town on the overland route to Adelaide before we cross that much-disputed 141st Eastern meridian which constitutes the artificial boundary of "South Australia." Here let us rest for the night, and return to Hamilton by railway to-morrow.

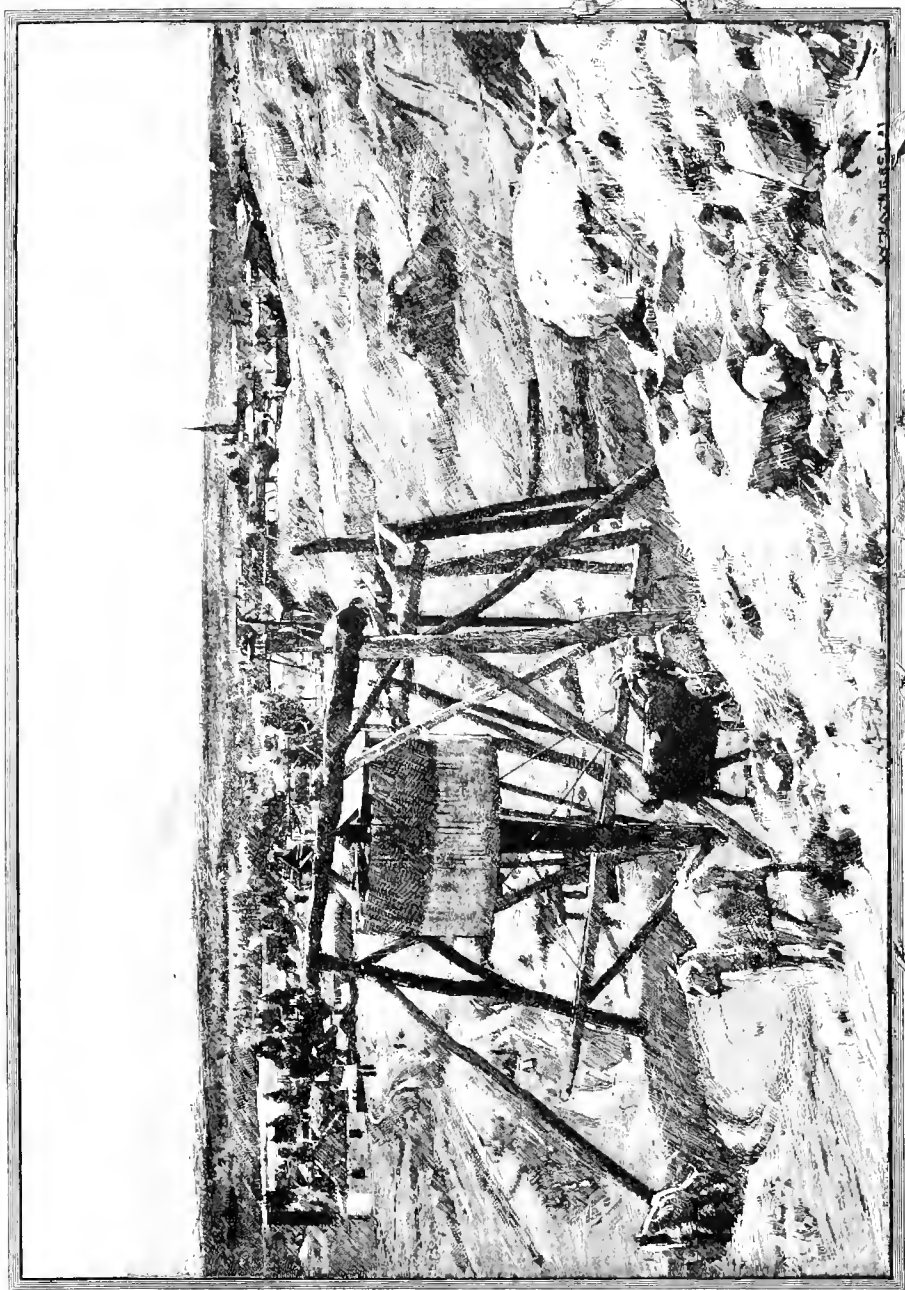
The loop-line from this town of Casterton to Hamilton joins the Portland main trunk at Branhohne. The stations



ON THE GRANGE BURN, HAMILTON

on the railway take their names from the richest and oldest sheep-runs of the colony—Henty, Merino Downs, Grassdale, Murchison. It is the land of the Golden Fleece. If the tourist will get out at Merino, he need only walk a hundred yards to the first station-homestead of the earliest settlers, the Merino Downs estate of the patriarchal Henty family.

The story of their settlement is remarkable. When Major Mitchell made his historical journey overland from Adelaide to Portland, in 1836—christening Australia Felix, discovering the Coleraine pastures, passing through these park-like downs, and naming the valley of Hamilton "The Grange"—he was astonished most of all by the sight of the whaling-boats and the little wooden house with its garden in the keeping of the Hentys at Portland Bay. The Major prepared his camp for an advance on this supposed nest of pirates, while the Hentys barricaded the windows and doors to resist what they thought were bushrangers who had escaped from Botany Bay. When mutual explanations had been made, the Hentys told the Major how they had brought a small merino flock with them eighteen months before from Tasmania, and had established these



STAWELL.

and their lucrative whaling plant at Portland. Edward Henty landed at Portland Bay on the 19th of November, 1833. He was the first colonist who set foot in Victoria, called at that time the Port Phillip District of New South Wales. He "made the first plough, turned the first furrow, planted the first vine, shod the first horse, and sheared the first sheep in Victoria," but he did not penetrate the interior until Mitchell related to him the story of the marvellous country through which he had just passed. It was in 1837 that Edward Henty's brother Stephen, then, started from Portland with their little flock of merino sheep, and initiated the occupation of "squatting" by establishing their run, like Hebrew nomadic patriarchs, on the hills which they named the "Merino Downs." The sheep population of Victoria has grown from that small beginning to its present census of over ten millions! Wool, not quartz, is the matrix of Victorian wealth. "Sheep," says the Spanish proverb, "have golden feet, and the print of their footsteps turns the land to gold."

The superiority of the strain of the Victorian merino is due to Mr. Thomas Henty, the father of the first colonist. The flock was formed in England a century or so ago by pure sheep culled from the royal merino flock of King George the Third. In Henfield's "History of Sussex" it is written that "in the year 1796 Thomas Henty, Esq., purchased the demesne lands in the parish of West Tarring, consisting of 281 acres . . . The breed of merino sheep has been brought to a high state of perfection by Mr. Henty, and many from his flock have been sent to New South Wales." This flock carried off all the show prizes in England until they were barred from competition because no flock in England could beat them. They repeated the feat in Tasmania until, on the death of old Thomas Henty, in 1839, the whole of his prize flocks were transferred to the sons Edward and Stephen at the Muntham and Merino Downs station in Victoria. To them the best Victorian studs trace their origin.

The Merino Downs estate is now in the possession of the last survivor of the early patriarchs, Mr. Francis Henty, affectionately known as "Uncle Frank." Its extent is 14,000 acres, and it carries, without any stress, the remarkable average of over three sheep to the acre. One sheep to the acre means fine land in Australia, for it must be noted that such a thing as stall-feeding is well-nigh unknown. The sheep live entirely on the natural grass, they are never housed, and they roam for miles, at times, without even the shelter of a green hedge. The strength of a chain is only that of its weakest link, and, in stocking even such fruitful pasture as the Merino Downs, account must be taken of the scarcity of feed at midsummer, when all herbage is parched for six or seven weeks, and when a "bush fire" will lick up the grass-stubble faster than a horse can canter to overtake it. The precaution here, as everywhere, is to plough a double furrow on each side of long strips, and then burn off the strips in the early summer, on the same principle as iron ships are protected from foundering by isolated watertight compartments. The property is mapped out by post-and-rail and wire fences into forty paddocks, containing each from twelve to twelve hundred acres. Some idea of the magnitude of Australian stations may be gathered, not only from this area, but from the live stock, which consists of 33,000 sheep, 2,000 head of cattle, and 150 horses. Shearing begins early in October, and lasts about seven weeks, the wool-shed

accommodating sixteen shearers, who jointly shear 1,100 a day. There is very little agriculture, though the capacities of the soil for that pursuit are unlimited. Only about 100 acres are cropped annually to meet the requirements of the homestead.

The house is of the most primitive kind, with stables and garden and outhouses, all of the old-fashioned order, relics of the earliest days. In the garden an English oak, planted forty years ago, boasts the "growth record" of the colony. Its branches spread over a diameter of sixty-three feet, and its trunk-girth, five feet above ground, is seven feet and a quarter. In the orchard the vine and the fig-tree typify the land of plenty. Very beautiful is the landscape in every direction; but the venerable owner, the last of his generation, takes not his pleasure "in trim gardens," but enjoys the eventide of a noble life in "retired leisure" in Melbourne.

Murndal, the settlement of the Winter-Cookes, represents a very different order of homestead. Lying in a valley, with a circular belt of hills on the opposite river-bank, the approach to it over the downs is not unlike the descent to Coleraine. There is nothing to indicate the haphazard camping of a nomad pastor; rather does it suggest the substantial castle, with its hamlet dependencies, transplanted from feudal England. And it looks quite as venerable. The ivy mantles all the walls, the elms are no longer saplings; pines and lindens cast warm shadows on red-tiled gables, and across the lawn flits the English pheasant, with the blackbird and the thrush. Within doors there is all the aristocratic tone of the "big house" of an English country squire. Heritage, not heat of early toil in the wilderness, gave Murndal to its present owner, who, an old Cheltonian, a Cantab, and a barrister of Lincoln's Inn, represents the landed gentry of the old country rather than the lucky shepherd of the new. His sensible recognition of the duties of the stewardship of his wealth have brought him homage such as might be paid to a lord of the manor, and his familiar title in the Western District is "the young Laird of Murndal."



CASTERTON.

Returning to Hamilton by the evening train, the visitor, before finally leaving it, should take the chance of seeing its Saturday market and cattle-sales. Early in the morning baskets of eggs, fresh butter, Devonshire cream, well-cured bacon, and plump poultry, will be brought to every door by solid and stolid German farmers' wives. They come in their waggons from Hochkirch, three or four miles away on the Penshurst road, and from Herrnhut, a Lutheran community and Moravian mission, which started

with the apostolic simplicity of "all things in common." But the idea was chimerical, as the equity courts discovered, and peasant proprietorship is now the more prevalent condition. Down in the sale-yards the language is polyglot—high German, low Dutch, rugged Gaelic, the rich brogue of the Irish, the drawling twang of the young Australian, with the stentorian tones of Robert Stapylton Bree, king of auctioneers, ringing in clarion English over all. Here may be bought milch cows for £4 or £5, herds of fat bullocks at £3 apiece, sheep at from half-a-crown to seven shillings, pigs for half-a-



AT CAVENDISH.

sovereign, and horses for £50 down to five shillings. Everything is in the open air—no shed, no awning—and the sheep and cattle occupy an immense paddock of draft-yards, separated by high post and rail divisions. The auctioneer runs about like a blue-jacket on the top of the highest rail, while the buyers sit on horseback, or squat on the fences, or lounge and smoke among the cattle, or wedge themselves among the buggy-wheels wherever they can. Life in a bucolic country makes rumination infective, and there is no more contented ruminant than he who buys no bullocks and shears no sheep, but settles himself on top of a friendly post in the morning sun, drinks long draughts of the delicious balmy spring air, and, amid the lowing herds and the bleating sheep, beguiles the market-hours with pipe and sketch-book in the contemplation of Hamiltonian character.

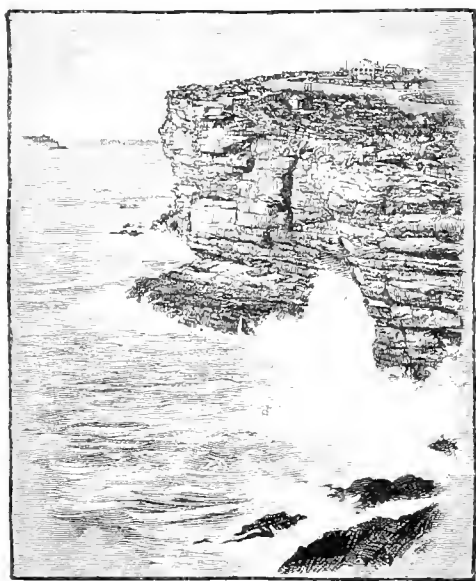
But a rolling stone cannot stay to gather moss. Our route lies eastward away to the Dead Sea of Corangamite and the country of that charming colonist, the wild English

rabbit. We travel by Cobb's coach twenty miles to Penshurst, overshadowed by the sugar-loaf cone of Mount Rouse. The fences now are very different from the green hedges we left at Hamilton. The fields are all marked out by unmortared stone walls, the material supplied by the dead volcano; and the physiognomy of the country resembles the stone-dyke character of Galway or the Lowlands. By Garamut, Hexham, Mortlake, and Perang, we pass, and so arrive, along the route of a projected new railway, at the present terminus of the Geelong line to Camperdown.



SYDNEY FROM THE SOUTH HEADS.

The South Heads—Watson's Bay—The Lighthouse—Fort Denison—The *Nelson*—Pinchgut Island—Woolloomooloo—Night.



ROCKS, SOUTH HEADS.

LOOKING down from the giddy height of South Heads, we can see, outside, the white foam incessantly beating against the broken masses of fallen rock and the ocean *débris*, while above range the shelves and jagged points of that vast wall of ever-wearing sandstone, and away towards the distant horizon heaves the blue ocean, not many shades deeper than the soft and velvety sky over our heads, upon which float the sunny, violet-shaded cloud-masses that one likes on summer days dreamily to gaze upon.

A little way towards the north we see the North Heads, with Watson's Bay dark and purple in the afternoon shadows. These North Heads spread along clear and sharply defined against the deep-blue waters, the sea-line of which reaches to the tops of

the beetling stone cliffs. The sea is dotted with ships and sails of all sizes and shapes, from the coasting steamers, filled with passengers, to the snowy, bird-like yachts that skim along the surface. Watson's Bay, with its cluster of houses and exposed rocks peering from amongst the heaths and grasses, shines out brightly above the sapphire waters, except where the spot of shadow falls abruptly over the cliffs which face towards the sea. From our point of view only a sloping hillside, bathed in sunshine, extends down to the silvery sands, with clearly-marked cottages, and here and there a villa of more pretentious appearance, half-concealed amidst its bowers of foliage. Between us and Watson's Bay is a spread of heath, with the glory of the golden sun upon it, gleaming upon white rocks, and causing spots where yesterday's rain has filled the holes and hollows to glisten with tiny sparkles of distant colour, where wattle-flower and native fuchsia blend indefinitely; while between us and that sunny spread are seen darker lines of scrub and flowers, as the forms and shadow details come out more distinctly.

At our back the south lighthouse towers up boldly, with whitewashed cottages at its base, as we turn and walk towards Sydney, seeking for the best standpoint from which to gain a general view of this most perfect and romantic harbour, now, as the sun hangs over its spires and houses, a scene of mystery and delight in the occasional glimpses that we get of it between the trees and bushes, while the clouds settle down and mix with the smoke from factories and steamers. At length

we come upon a turn of the road where a cutting in the rocks gives to us the opportunity, with a little climbing, of obtaining what we require. These rocks have been blasted, and so are clean cut; but they have a verdant hill behind them, and all down their iron-stained sides the water streams constantly, making clear pools at the roadside, and, with the ferns and grasses, presenting just the foreground at which a painter might aim if he were composing his subject.

To the right of the prospect stands a thickly-coated gum-tree. It catches the light of the yet high sun upon the upper edge of one of its spotted grey limbs and down the right side of the twisted trunk (the spots of sharding bark remind one of a leopard's skin); the leaves are turned broad-wise towards us, for the sun is still a little to the right, though high, so that he casts thick, dark shadows through them, while they appear in bold masses with the warm-tinted clouds and golden-grey haze of distant bays behind.

A fringe of lighter wood lines the roadside with velvety under-shadows, sombre-tinted grasses and briars flinging up their slender lines against the shadow. To the left rise thin-leaved trees, reaching down to the tufts of native grass which border the little water-pools and rivulets beneath us. The roadway is filled with crossing, long-slanting shadows, showing ruts of carriage-wheels (for this is a favourite afternoon drive); light patches of sun-lighted dry portions, and sun-gleaming wet parts, shadows and lights, which incline towards us and creep up the straight-cut rocks, until they lose themselves in dripping mosses and creepers.

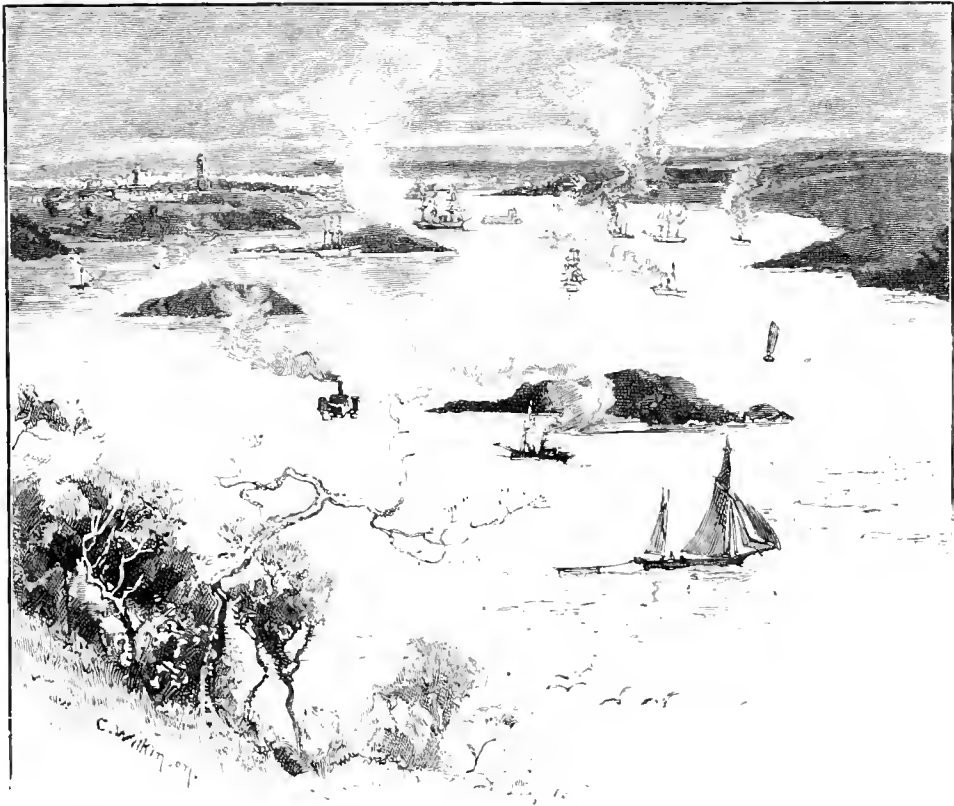
Away in the distance reposes Sydney, bathed in warm glory. See, here are misty shadows and jutting promontories. The clouds are cream-tinted on the upper edges, with under-banks of olive, dun-grey fumes, and through this, towards the circular quay, appear glimpses of yellow sides of buildings, obscured at moments by the white puffs of smoke which come from behind Garden Island and blot out portions of it and of the city behind.

A soft blur of blue-white haze spreads and dissolves over the sun-lighted city, and clears away, or gets lost in that grey bank of white-edged clouds. For a moment the scene alters. Between us and Circular Quay lies that superb war-ship *The Nelson*, dwarfing Fort Denison on the island, which is familiarly called Pinchgut, as well as the islands between us and it, its dark hull and massively-corded masts standing up against the dazzling buildings, and seeming to occupy half the water space between Pinchgut and Garden Islands. Other vessels crowd about in the distance, and lie, some light-hulled, some dark, within the basin of Woolloomooloo. Little yachts fly about in all directions, and a harbour steamer puffs out white and amber clouds as it fussily faces towards Watson's Bay, to the right of the fort.

Pinchgut Island was known amongst the aborigines as *Mattewai*. The first Governor christened it *Rock Island*, but the more popular name of *Pinchgut* has clung to it. The story runs that in the first year of the colony's life, when famine was staring the first settlers, soldiers, and prisoners in the face, one who stole some food, a poor, hungry, but dishonourable fellow, was punished with the punishment of *Tantalus*: he was allowed to see food, but not to touch it. The modern-built fort

upon this island occupies the centre of the water, and guards both sides of the harbour. It is a land-mark, and decidedly martial in its shape, a low, rounded keep, with a long level wall, terminating in a thin edge of rocks, which form its foundations.

On the other side ranges along in softened shadow the north shore, with its dense clusters of houses and over-reaching mansions. It is all too hazy to distinguish buildings from foliage, except where the mansions assert themselves; and the gum-tree branches and leafage only permit us to catch a portion of the shore behind Bradley's Heads.

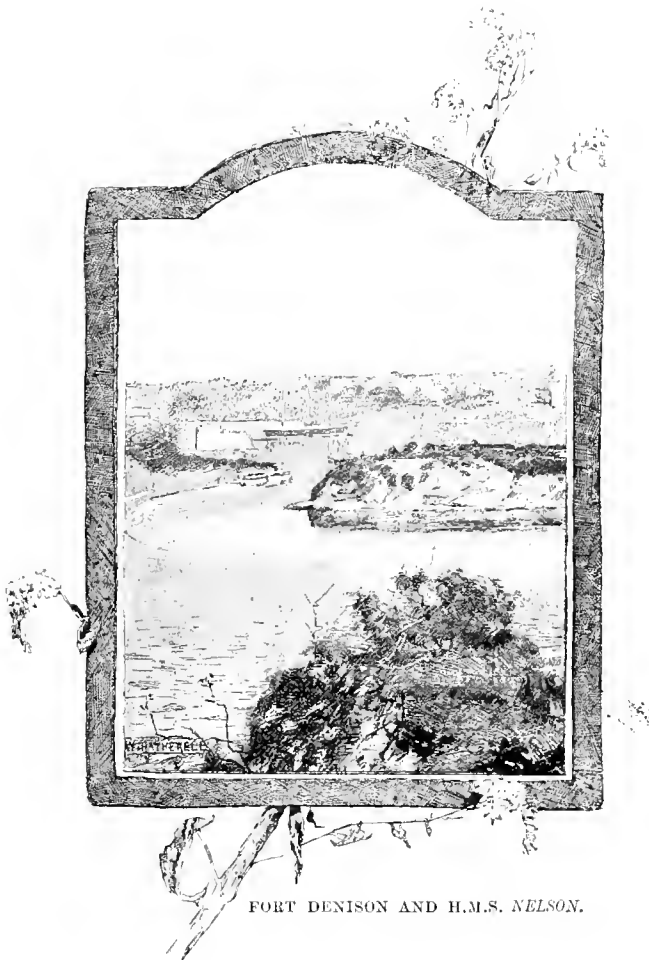


SYDNEY HARBOUR FROM THE SOUTH HEADS.

Over by Woolloomooloo the buildings show dark against the mystery of innumerable streets and houses behind. Sydney looks a mighty city as it drifts imperceptibly into that fume bank of dun-grey clouds. Three spires show up behind Woolloomooloo, too indefinite to be recognised. And between us and this vast spread of streets, spires, and houses, sparkle the ultramarine ripples of the harbour, seeming to be lighter as they approach to the dark but thin fringe of tree-work against the roadside, with Garden, Clark, and Shark Islands resting in a crescent line towards our standpoint: Garden Island, with the white smoke against it, dark and sloping off towards the inland; Clark Island, more rounded and more densely wooded; and Shark Island, low-lying and very long, with some bare branches rising above a broken-up mass of foliage.

We work on at our sketch, and the sun floats over the right side of Circular Quay, and as it slowly dips into those clouds, colour takes the place of form, and only the roofs and right edges of the buildings shine out from the gathering violet. The orb grows larger and more golden as it descends, and the fumes, intenser crimson and purple, gather up towards that centre of lustre. The tremulous waters take it up and carry it along by the right side of Pinchgut, and trail it down upon Shark Island and the belt of trees below us, their tops afire with amber sparkles.

A golden lustre is being focussed, as evening draws near, into one bright globe, with a straight orange line; clouds alter their shapes, and some float feather-fashion high up amidst the opal space, with cross ribs of crimson and dun colour; the feather clouds are cream-tinted and silvery as they near the upper heavens: more massive clusters gather close to that flaming eye, and catch upon their rounded sides soft reflections of its glory; then the disc passes into wreaths of the densest purple, and after hanging for one instant against the far-off blue mountain ranges, vanishes behind them. Night is upon us.



FORT DENISON AND H.M.S. NELSON.

THE WEST COAST SOUNDS.

Giant Mountains—A Lone Land—Primeval Beauty—Flowering Trees—Fish—A Mythical Tribe—Long Sound—Cuttle Cove—Dusky Sound—Acheron Passage—Wet Jacket Arm—Caswell Sound—George Sound—Milford Sound—Bowen Fall—"The City."

A GLANCE at the map of the Middle Island of New Zealand will show the reader that for four hundred miles the western coast presents an unbroken line without an opening of any kind which could afford shelter to shipping. At the extreme south-west corner, however, a marked contrast is visible. For a distance of a hundred miles the shore is deeply indented with a succession of bays and inlets, not more than a few miles apart, and in some cases running inland for upwards of twenty miles. These are the celebrated West Coast Sounds, the scenery of which forms one of the chief glories of the Middle Island. They are cut off from the interior by a lofty chain of mountains, which have hitherto presented an effectual barrier to any attempt to approach them from the landward side. From the sea the Sounds are easily accessible, though the extremely narrow entrances render careful navigation necessary. The Sounds seldom exceed a mile in width, and have the appearance of completely land-locked lakes. The seas inside are absolutely still and sheltered, though, like lakes, they are liable to sudden down-rushing gusts of wind.

The great depth of water interferes much with their usefulness as harbours. In some of the sounds no anchorage can be found, whilst in others it is only right at the head, where there is a small strip of shallower water, that it is safe for a vessel to pass the night. The Sounds are situated between parallels 44° and 46° south latitude. They were first discovered by Captain Cook in his second voyage round the world in 1773. Since then they have been visited by occasional whalers in search of shelter; and about once a year a Government steamer calls on lighthouse and survey business. It was till lately almost an impossibility for a stranger to have a chance of seeing them: but for the last few years the Union Company has been in the habit of allowing its steamers in summer-time to call in at Milford, or one of the other sounds. Moreover, every January the Company despatches a boat on a nine days' excursion round the Sounds, thus affording to the traveller an opportunity of exploring their beautiful scenery, which otherwise would be quite out of reach.

One can hardly imagine anything more beautiful than these island-dotted waters winding in and out amongst the hills. The mountains surrounding them are very lofty, ranging in height from 3,000 to 8,000 feet, their peaks capped with eternal snow, and their sides covered with the most luxuriant sub-tropical vegetation, growing down to the very edge of the sea. These giant mountains are not separated from the water by ranges of smaller hills and sloping beaches, as in most lakes, but they come sheer down into the sea, their almost perpendicular sides often affording no landing-place for miles. Dr. Hector, the Government geologist, accounts for the absence of beach by supposing that a sudden sinking of the land has taken place. The water then



THE HEAD, HALL'S ARM.

rushed in from the outer ocean, filling up the gaps to their present sea-level. The effect is extremely striking, and it is almost difficult to realise the height of the overhanging mountains, so close to the water do their tops appear. The Sounds have often been compared to the Fiords of Norway; but great as is the resemblance, the differences are still more obvious. In Norway, the presence of man is everywhere; in New Zealand there is a constant feeling of utter loneliness. In the former case, perched on a hill-top, may be seen a church; on some seemingly inaccessible spot a small village stands, or a farm, where children have been born and have grown up, places that have been endeared with the name of home. If it be true that the Hawkesbury is inferior to the Rhine because the law of association peoples the banks of the latter river with the heroes and heroism of legend and of story, in the same way the Sounds suffer in that but for their short connection with Captain Cook, they are not linked with a single point in human history or with anything to attract human sympathy.

But if the Northern Fiords excel in the ruggedness and grandeur of the surrounding mountains, as well as in human interest, assuredly they can show nothing to vie with the exquisite loveliness of the New Zealand bush. The variety of foliage and the rich undergrowth of ferns and mosses give to the Sounds an unequalled and peculiar beauty, and the traveller seems suddenly transplanted into an enchanted region when, after tossing on the stormy waves of the Southern Ocean, he finds himself all at once in a calm inland sea amongst these scenes of fairylike loveliness. The New Zealand bush is celebrated for the richness and variety of its foliage, and nowhere can it be seen in greater perfection than here. The forest has been left undisturbed in its primeval beauty, and almost every step one takes reveals some fresh thing to wonder at and admire. The trees are principally varieties of totara, pine, and birch, their leaves of a vivid spring green all the year round. Each tree is a garden in itself, being covered with a carpet of most delicate ferns, mosses, and orchids, besides larger parasites, which hang from the boughs, often making an almost impenetrable thicket. The rainfall in the Sounds is very considerable, and the atmosphere is saturated with moisture. The perpetual damp is particularly favourable to the growth of ferns, and they are found in immense variety, from the tall tree-ferns, reaching to a height of forty feet, to the tiny filmy fern, with its delicate, transparent fronds. The beautiful double crape variety is abundant, and the glossy leaves of the kidney fern are to be seen on nearly every fallen trunk.

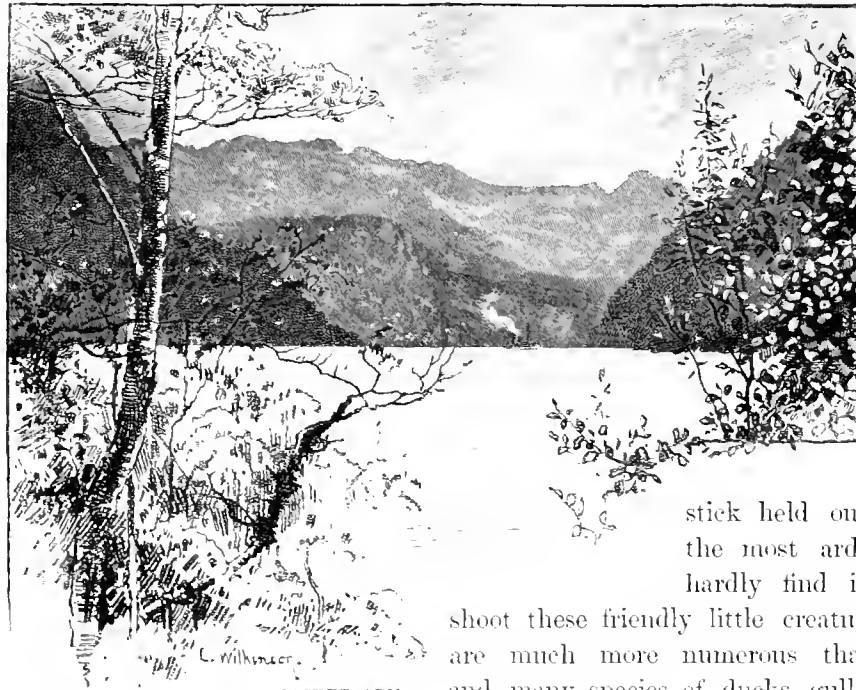
Of wild flowers there are not many, but the flowering trees are a great feature. First of all must be mentioned the rata, with its dark green foliage and blossom of deepest crimson. When in bloom, it makes a perfect blaze of colour, and forms a lovely contrast to the bright green of the surrounding trees. The ribbon-wood also grows freely: it has a white, waxlike blossom, which grows in large clusters, and smells deliciously sweet. There are also the manuka, with its delicately-scented little star-like flowers, wild fuchsias, veronicas of various shades in great profusion, clematis, and others too numerous to mention, blossoming at different seasons of the year. The cabbage palms, peculiar to New Zealand, are scattered here and there, and everywhere

under foot are rich, soft mosses in endless variety. Though the bush is so rich in vegetable life, animal life is extraordinarily scarce: almost the only living things to be seen are the birds, and even they are not so numerous as one would expect, considering that they have no enemies of any kind to prey on them. The most common are the little dark grey New Zealand robins, the tui-tui, the bell birds, with their musical note, and the wekas. Occasionally the kakapo, a large green ground parrot, has been caught, and more rarely the curious wikis or wingless birds are found. To the traveller accustomed to the shy denizens of English woods, nothing is

more astonishing than the extraordinary tameness of these New Zealand birds. If a halt should be made, they will come gathering round to inspect the strangers without the slightest fear, and will even perch on the end of a

stick held out to them. Even the most ardent sportsman can hardly find it in his heart to

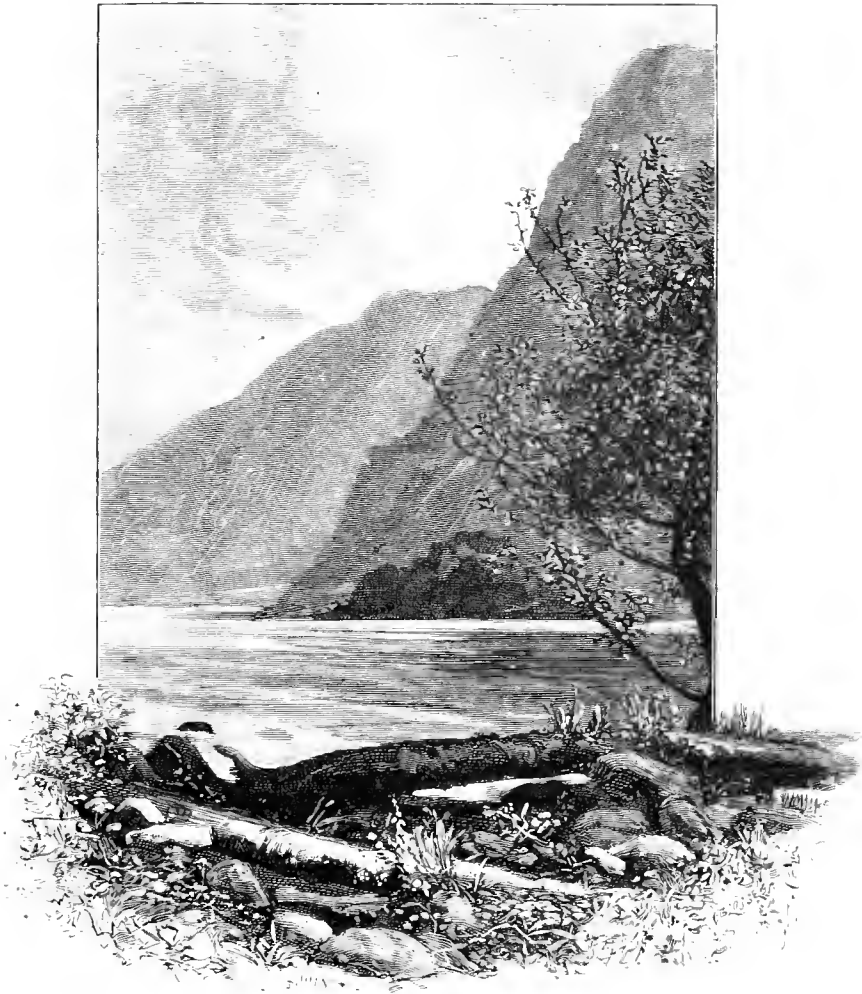
shoot these friendly little creatures. The sea birds are much more numerous than those on land, and many species of ducks, gulls, and penguins are found.



WET JACKET ARM.

The waters are crowded with fish. The most common are the blue cod, the ugly maoris, with their backs covered with spines, the beautiful trumpeters, and the still more beautiful bright red butterfish. There is a large fat fish, called the groper, fully four feet long, and broad in proportion. It is not good eating, being too coarse. Besides these, eels, flounders, mullet, and other specimens abound, with numerous crayfish. The flora of the sea is, in its way, as beautiful as that of the shore: and the clearness of the water enables one to see to perfection the clusters of seaweed and other marine plants, some of enormous size, and others of exquisite colour. Insect life in the Sounds is chiefly represented by the sand-fly, a tiny but most unpleasant pest, which infests the shore. The traveller will do well to provide himself with a veil and long thick gloves, so as to be protected against their attacks. They are usually very numerous by the water's edge and on the banks of the streams: but on penetrating a little way into the bush,

their numbers diminish, and comparative peace may be had. With two exceptions, the Sounds are quite uninhabited, and it seems likely that they will long remain so, the steep sides of the mountains affording little scope for settlement. There are not even traces of any native inhabitants to be seen, the few human remains that are found being those left by the whaling ships that have occasionally put in for shelter. There is a



ANOTHER VIEW OF WET JACKET ARM.

tradition that a native tribe is still living amongst the mountains at the back of the Sounds, but there is no authentic proof of their presence, and the story seems scarcely probable. Various attempts have been made to explore these ranges, but none have been successful. The immense fields of ice and snow have hitherto defied any attempt to cross them, and the only approach to the Sounds is from the sea. Unless the traveller be the fortunate possessor of a well-found steam yacht, his only means of visiting the

Sounds at present will be to join the annual excursion of the Union Company's steamer. This trip is very carefully planned, so as to enable those on board to see everything to the best advantage in the short time allowed. The steamer anchors for the night in the different sounds, and she is provided with a steam-launch and an extra supply of boats, so that every facility is given for all the passengers to land, and follow their favourite pursuits, botanising, sketching, fishing, or exploring, as they feel inclined.

The Sounds resemble each other so much in their general characteristics, that it is needless to give a detailed description of each one. But some of them possess special features of interest. Starting from the south, the first opening is reached 216 miles after leaving Port Chalmers. The coast line is very wild and mountainous, and apparently no gap of any kind is visible. It is not till quite close in shore that the narrow entrance to the first sound, Preservation Inlet, can be seen. Preservation Inlet was so named by Captain Cook in remembrance of the deliverance of his crew from the death by scurvy which was threatening them, the vegetable food he discovered there completely restoring them to health. The narrow entrance passed, the waters spread out into a lovely lake, which, sprinkled as it is with islands, has been compared by visitors to Loch Lomond. As we pass in, an apparently solid wall of mountain rises in front, but a sharp turn shows there is a way open, and Long Sound is entered. It is fourteen miles to its head. The scenery is wonderfully beautiful, steep mountains rising tier behind tier all thickly wooded to the water's edge. Usually their rocky sides go sheer down into the sea, but here and there a tiny strip of sandy beach is visible, the only places where it would be possible to effect a landing. The rich green of the foliage is relieved now and then by a lovely little waterfall, dashing down over the steep rocks of the mountain sides, and in the background a few patches of snow glisten on the higher peaks. On one side towers Needle Peak, 4,100 feet, and on the other Forgotten Peak, 3,682 feet. Every few yards seem to open up a fresh vision of beauty, and the strange charm is intensified by the absolute silence and solitude that prevails, not a trace of man's presence being anywhere visible. The waters of Long Sound are of enormous depth, and no safe anchorage can be found there, so to pass the night it is necessary to return to a bay nearer the entrance, Cuttle Cove. This is a most lovely spot, a sheet of water nearly circular, surrounded by soft wooded hills, and dotted with small islands, some of them exquisitely beautiful. One, in particular, may be noticed, shaped like a coral reef, the lagoon inside surrounded with masses of crimson rata trees, making a most lovely picture.

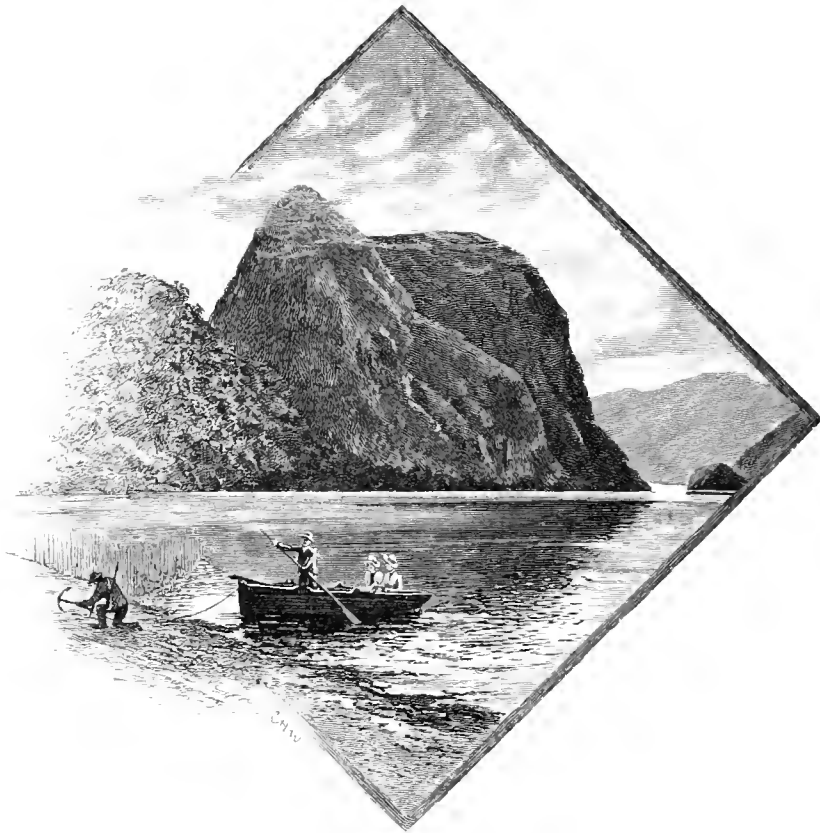
The excursion steamer usually remains two nights in Cuttle Cove, and the days are spent in exploring its beauties. It is, perhaps, the best fishing-ground of any of the Sounds, and the anglers have a good time. The fish bite very freely, and, like the birds, seem to have no fear of man and his devices. The water is so clear that one can look far down and see the fish nibbling at the bait, or swimming round amongst the masses of seaweed. The best spots for fishing are found under the lee of the small islands, and, the fish being caught, the order of the day is usually to land, and cook them for lunch on the tiny beach. The beaches are covered with lovely shells, and behind

is the bush, with its wealth of vegetation, affording to the botanist a paradise in the way of hunting-ground. Many delightful hours can be spent exploring its recesses, and one is never tired of feasting one's eyes on the soft loveliness of these woods and the exquisite colouring of the ferns and mosses. Cuttle Cove is, perhaps, the least grand of the Sounds, but it has a charm of its own, and one leaves it with regret. The steamer passes out to the sea through another arm—Dark Cloud, or Chalky Inlet, the latter name being given from an island at the entrance with conspicuous chalky cliffs.

A run of fifty miles brings us to Dusky Sound, the entrance to which is wider than that to any of the other Sounds. It is strikingly beautiful, and completely different in character from Preservation Inlet. Dusky Sound was so named by Captain Cook, who wrote a special account of it. He says: "A prospect more rude and craggy is rarely to be met with; far inland appear nothing but the summits of mountains of stupendous heights, consisting of rocks totally barren and naked, save where, towards the tops, they are snow-covered." The view on entering is wild and grand in the extreme. The mountains in the distance are of great height, and their broken and jagged tops, here and there touched with snow, give a gloomy aspect to the scene. In the foreground are numerous islands and rocks—one, Anchor Island, 1,600 feet in height. On the left is Resolution Island—named after Captain Cook's ship, the *Resolution*—with its curious peninsula of high pointed rocks, christened by Captain Cook the Five Fingers Peninsula, from its resemblance to the fingers of a man's hand. There is a perfect chain of islands right to the head of Dusky Sound, all rich with the same lovely vegetation. The mountains rise higher and higher as we go further up the Sound, but their grandeur is softened by the graceful foliage with which their sides are clothed. Dusky Sound is one of the largest, being twenty-two miles in length. It is celebrated as having been the place where Captain Cook discovered spinach in searching for vegetable food for his scurvy-stricken crew. Near the head a small clearing comes in view. Here, for the first time, are signs of man's presence, and a log hut is to be seen near the shore. This is the home of Mr. Docherty, who, sometimes alone, sometimes with a mate, has been engaged since 1877 in prospecting for copper and other minerals. For months he is often entirely without any society save that of his dog, who, besides being a companion, goes hunting for his master, and, when ordered, brings him in a kakapo or wood-hen for his dinner. Docherty has not yet succeeded in making his fortune. He has in different spots discovered copper, lithographic stone, and asbestos, but he cannot induce any company to undertake the task of developing his mines. There is no doubt the mountains are rich in minerals, but the great expense of working in these inaccessible spots has hitherto prevented any enterprise in that direction.

Leaving the lonely one to his retirement, the steamer goes on to the head of the Sound, whence we have a magnificent view of Mount Solitary, always covered with snow. It then turns back as far as an opening on the northern side, called Acheron Passage, so named by Captain Richards, after H.M.S. *Acheron*, the vessel in which he made a very careful survey of the Sounds in 1851. Many of the smaller Sounds

bear the names of officers of his ship, which accounts for their very prosaic titles, such as Smith, Daggs, and Thompson. Acheron Passage is exceedingly grand: the mountains on either side tower up to a great height. It is an extremely narrow channel between stupendous cliffs, and has a sternly gloomy aspect that well befits its name. Midway up the passage the steamer again turns aside into a small inlet—Wet Jacket Arm. It is here that the anchor is let down for the night. And it



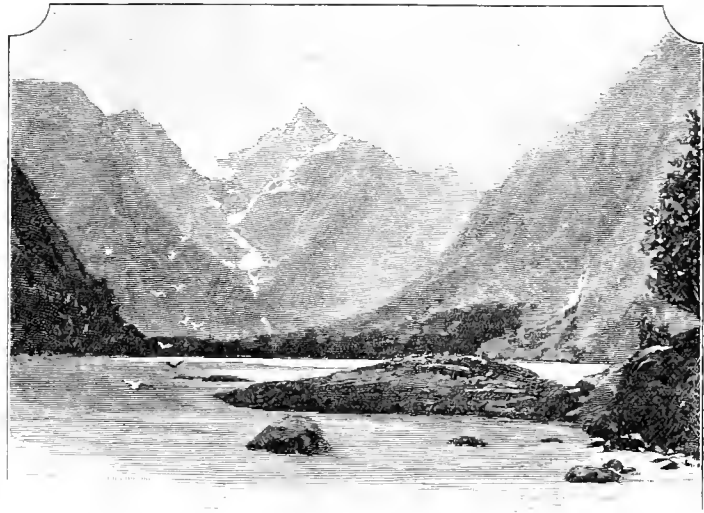
HALL'S ARM.

would be difficult to find a more beautiful spot for the purpose. It is a narrow cove almost shut in by lofty mountains covered with dense bush as far as timber-line, which frowns above a mass of dark grey rocks relieved by gleaming stretches of snow. The cliffs come down perpendicularly into the sea, and apparently there is no landing-place anywhere; but a little search discovers the usual small patch of shingle. At the head of the cove is a piece of flat swampy ground, and on one side a charming camping-place is found, where a little mountain stream dashes down to the sea.

It is well worth while to follow up the course of this stream inland as far as is practicable: it runs between high overhanging banks and cliffs fringed with a lovely network of ferns, mosses, and creepers; the fern fronds are sometimes as much as six feet

in length. It is impossible to penetrate the bush at the sides for any great distance, so exceedingly thick is it: and the easiest course is to work up the bed of the stream, which is not very deep, the only risk run being that of an occasional wetting. A climb of about an hour brings one to a lovely waterfall tumbling into a deep, dark pool. Further progress is here barred by a wall of perpendicular rocks, and one thankfully sits down to rest and enjoy the beauty of the scene. The combination of the luxuriant semi-tropical vegetation with the clear mountain stream dashing over its rocky bed, is so exquisite that the eye never tires of it. The descent is accomplished considerably quicker than the climb upwards, and the sight-seers are ready to enjoy the excellent "billy" tea made by those of the party who were unwilling to attempt the scramble.

Now the steamer, leaving Wet Jacket Arm, passes on through the further end of Acheron Passage, a gorge which has the same savage grandeur as that already seen. It leads into another Sound—Breaksea—from which the open sea is regained. Passing Daggs Sound, a small inlet, we next turn into Doubtful Sound, the largest of all, the scenery of which is even more beautiful than that of Dusky Sound. At the entrance is a large island—Secretary Island—



MILFORD SOUND.

completely barring the way, and making an admirable breakwater. This Sound is of great length, and branches out into various arms on each side. The view at the entrance is simply magnificent, and further on, at the junction of Doubtful, Bradshaw, Thompson, and Smith Sounds, it is strikingly grand. We have the same union as before of bare, rugged peaks and the softest green woods, but always changing in outline. As we proceed, the Sound becomes more and more beautiful. After passing a large island—Rolla Island—a turn to the right opens out Hall's Arm, with its Head: here the scenery is the finest we have yet seen. But, beautiful as it is, Hall's Sound is too deep to be a safe anchorage, and the steamer turns, passing on the other side of Secretary Island through Thompson Sound, out to sea.

Nancy Sound and Charles Sound are usually omitted, and Caswell Sound is the next visited. It differs somewhat from those last seen, running into the land almost straight, without any arms branching out from its sides. The mountains surrounding it are very lofty, but the straightness of the sides does not produce the same beautiful effect as the more varied outline of Dusky and Doubtful Sounds. Captain

Richards thus describes it:—"A view of the surrounding country from the summit of one of the mountains bordering this Sound, of from four to five thousand feet high, is one of the grandest and most magnificent spectacles it is possible to imagine. We could only compare the scene around, as far as the eye could reach—and that was inland to a distance of sixty miles—to a vast sea of mountains of every possible variety of shape and ruggedness. The clouds and mist floated far beneath us, and the harbour appeared as no more than an insignificant pool. The prospect was most bewildering, and even to a practised eye the possibility of recognising any particular mountain as a point in the survey seemed to be quite hopeless." About half-way down the Sound a deserted settlement comes into view. Here a company was once formed for working a marble quarry. The white marble is plainly seen gleaming out from the green foliage, but the expenses of working proved too heavy for profit, and the enterprise was given up. The huts are still standing, and their forsaken appearance adds to the desolate aspect of the scene.

The next Sound to be entered is George Sound. It is thus described by Mr. Green in his "High Alps of New Zealand":—"The expanse of water which we saw on entering reminded us somewhat of the Lake of Brienz, and on reaching its inner end we expected to turn round and come out. But this was only the vestibule, for a deep gorge opened to the right, so narrow that the steamer could barely have turned in it. And now we steamed through the most lovely corridor of rich forest scenery, rising tier above tier to the highest limits of vegetation. On and on we went, past an islet covered with fine trees draped with lichens, the whole reflected gem-like in the still water, thinking that every bend and branching arm would be the last, till, on reaching it, another charming vista opened ahead. When about twelve miles from the sea we reached the inner sanctuary, a fitting home of the nymphs. A strong rush of water here met us, while the filmy haze and dull booming of a waterfall filled the air. The screw now ceased its motion, the eddy of the fall drew us along, grazing the rocks and trees which hung their branches almost over our deck; we slipped past a point, and entered a little basin, in which we were quite shut in from the view of more than half a square mile of water. Immediately before us the foaming fall plunged into the Sound, filling the air with its roar. For a moment we felt as if we were at the bottom of a deep well, so small was the patch of sky overhead, the walls of forest all around rising rapidly for 3,000 or 4,000 feet." The steamer anchors close to this waterfall, where there is a convenient landing-place. A delightful expedition can be taken, rowing about four miles down the arm that opens on the right, and landing on the shore where Arnold's Creek comes into the sea. The view of the Sound from this point is indescribably beautiful, and a scramble up the rocky creek is well worth trying. The trees round here are larger and finer than any yet seen, and some magnificent specimens grow close to the banks of the creek. About two miles up the walking becomes easy, and one might wander on far into the heart of the hills if there were sufficient time.

Another most charming walk—or rather scramble—can be taken from the landing-place at the waterfall. This is the only one of the Sounds in which the vestige of a track can be found. To the right of the stream the way leads up some steep rocks—the former

bed of the torrent—to a small path through the bush. This brings one out at the head of a most lovely little tarn lying under the shadow of the hills, every leaf of the thick overhanging trees and ferns reflected in its waters. Behind, a glimpse is obtained of the great mountains beyond, apparently an endless vista, and the whole is a picture never to be forgotten. A short walk through the bush from the head of the tarn brings into view a second and larger lake, and towards the foot the track leads to the top of the waterfall, which from this point looks most picturesque. For those who care for more adventurous climbing, it is well worth while to cross the waterfall and ascend one of the smaller hills. A bridge must be made across, which is easily accomplished by cutting down some of the trees near. It is hard work scrambling up through the bush; the tangle of wiry supplejacks is often almost impenetrable, and the “bush lawyer”—so called, presumably, because, having once caught you, it never lets you go—insidiously twines itself round wherever it can catch hold. The ground under foot is a mass of fallen rotten tree trunks, overgrown with moss, and the whole is dripping with moisture, rendering the atmosphere somewhat steamy, but causing the vegetation to be most luxuriant. It is necessary to carry a strong rope, for in some places steep cliffs have to be scaled with scarcely any foothold, and it is also a wise precaution to take an axe for the purpose of “blazing” the trees as you go. The bush is so dense that it is very easy to get entirely lost, and no one can be too careful in this respect. Hard as the work is, it is novel and exciting, and the glorious views that are now and then obtained through an opening in the forest will repay any amount of trouble. The Sound below looks in the distance like a lovely tiny lake; and there are magnificent glimpses every now and then into the surrounding mountain ranges.

Plenty of time must be allowed for an excursion of this kind, for so thick is the bush that even practised climbers will scarcely get through more than 500 feet an hour. If the traveller has the good fortune to be in George Sound after a night of rain, he will see a complete transformation. The green hills are simply alive with waterfalls, pouring down on all sides from hills thousands of feet high. It is a most glorious sight: but a still grander awaits him, for the steamer, passing Bligh Sound, turns into Milford Sound, the most northerly and the most beautiful of them all. Mr. Green thus describes it:—“After pounding through a head sea for about twenty miles, we came to an outlying sea-swept rock, over which a few albatrosses soared, and rounding it in a furious squall of wind and rain, we entered the still waters of Milford Sound. Vertical cliffs rose for thousands of feet on either hand, and we drove in before a blast so strong as almost to make steaming unnecessary; the surface of the sea would now and then be torn off in sheets, driven along in spindrift, and again all would be as calm as glass. Waterfalls resembling the Staubbach came down the cliffs from far above the clouds, and were blown away into spray while in mid-air by the fury of the storm. Wherever vegetation could get a footing on these immense precipices, lovely tree-ferns and darker shrubs grew in profusion, all dripping with moisture, and running up the cliffs in long strips of verdure till lost to our view aloft in the torn white mists. The vivid green of the foliage was the feature of all this wondrous scene which struck me most. Two or three miles up the Sound we

steamed close to an immense waterfall, which, in one plunge of 300 feet, leaped into the Sound with a roar like thunder, drowning our voices, and sending great gushes of spray over the steamer's deck. The face of another great cliff was so draped with numberless small falls that it seemed to be covered with a veil of silver gauze about 300 yards in width. While passing along here we fired off a gun. Echo after echo resounded from cliff to cliff, and from invisible crags high over our heads the echo again returned as a voice from the clouds. The mists now showed an inclination to clear off, the rain ceased, and as we entered the inner basin of the Sound the forests increased in beauty. The totara pines, draped with festoons of grey lichen, con-

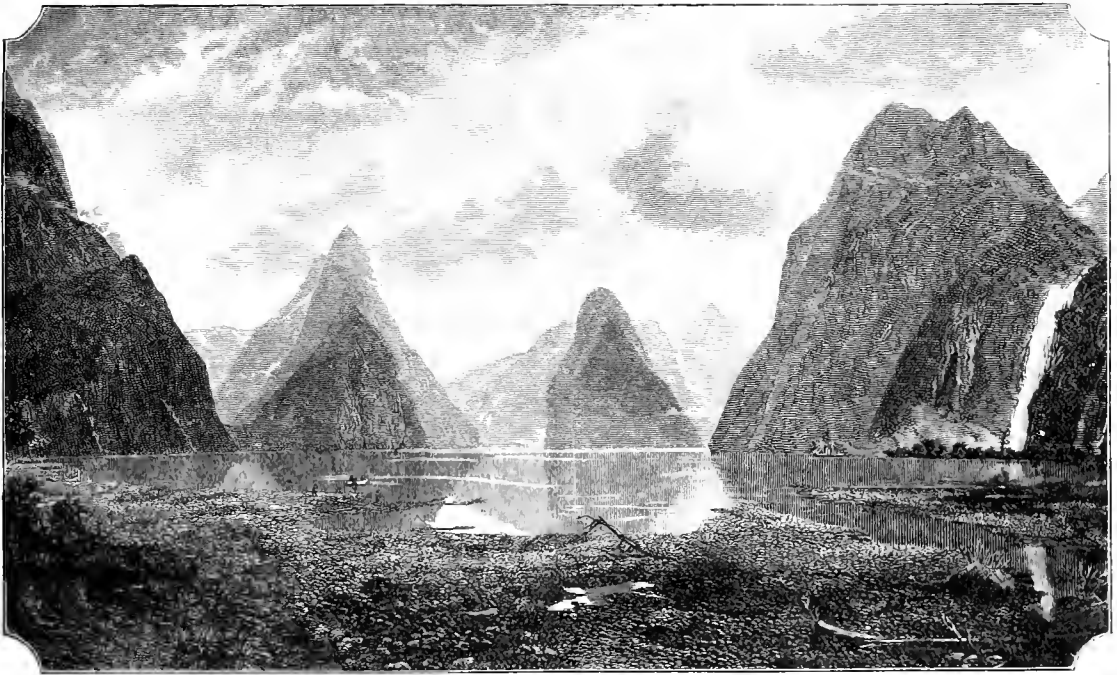


THE LION, MILFORD SOUND.

trasted well with the soft green of the great fern fronds, and formed a suitable background to the scarlet blossoms of the rata, which here and there lit up the upper surface of the forest with patches of intense colour. Gleams of sunshine began to dart through the clouds, giving a momentary flash on one of the numerous cascades, and then, passing over forest and cliff, added new beauties of light and shade. When about eight miles from the open sea, a booming sound rose high over the voices of the numerous cascades, growing louder as we advanced, and, rounding a forest-clad point, we came upon the grandest of New Zealand waterfalls, the great Bowen Fall. Its first fall is only about fifty feet into a rock basin, but leaping from it upwards and outwards in a most wonderful curve, it plunges down with a deafening roar in a single leap of 300 feet. The *Te Anau* was allowed to drift up in the eddy caused by the fall, and being caught by the stream in the midst of drenching clouds

of spray, she was spun round as though she were a mere floating twig; then steaming to a short distance, she stopped again. The weather had now taken up sufficiently for us to see through an opening in the clouds the snow-clad top of Mitre Peak, which rises in one great precipice of 5,000 feet from the surface of the Sound. The glacier on Pembroke Peak showed for a few minutes, and was then lost to view; but what we saw formed the grandest combination of scenery upon which my eyes had ever rested."

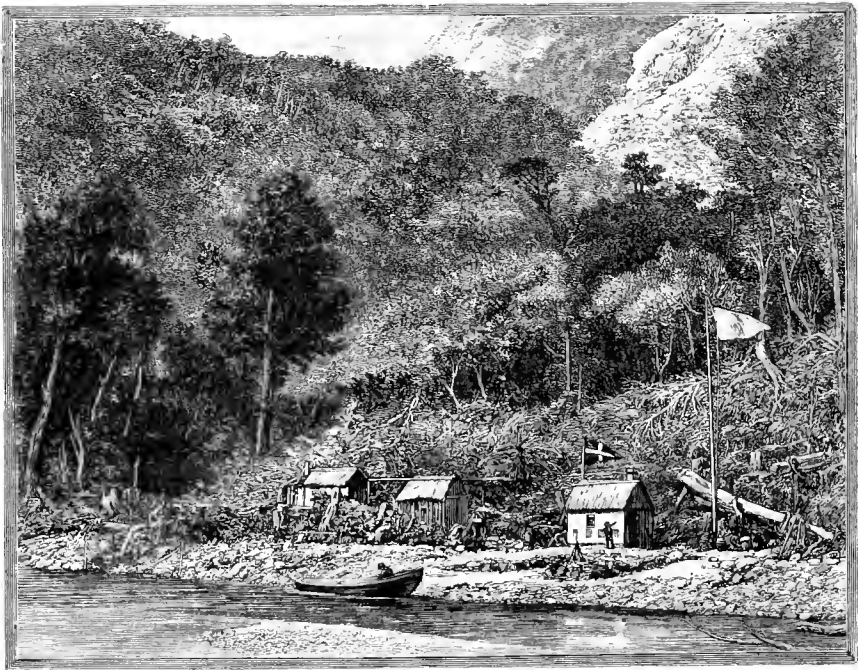
Before reaching the Bowen Fall, Mount Kimberley is passed, a precipitous wall



ANOTHER BIT OF MILFORD SOUND.

of cliff, rising 2,500 feet sheer from the water's edge, and ending in the spur known as the Lion Rock. The rock is perfectly bare, and very dark in colour, forming a magnificent contrast to the dazzlingly white glacier of Mount Pembroke, which rises sharply behind. At the head of Milford Sound is a small settlement called "The City." A man called Donald Sutherland landed here in 1877, and, with a mate, has been at work ever since prospecting for gold. The three houses are named respectively No. 1, Kennedy Street, No. 1, Rotorna Street, and Post Office. Sutherland has an interesting collection of natural curiosities, and does not seem to find his life too lonely. He has supplies from the Government lighthouse steamer, which calls occasionally. There is no good anchorage at Milford, and it is so narrow a sound that it is not safe to remain here more than a few hours, for if bad weather or fog came on it would be impossible to find the way out. The New Zealand

Government have announced their intention of putting down moorings, which will be a great boon, as every visitor longs to spend days, not hours, exploring its recesses. Milford is the last of the sounds to be visited, and it is well that it is so, for, beautiful as they all are this so far surpasses them that, if it were seen first, the others could not but seem tame.



"THE CITY," MILFORD SOUND.

SANDHURST.

A Forest of the Dead—Mount Macedon—Castlemaine—Bendigo, *alias* Sandhurst—The Fernery—Mother Nature—Rosalind Park—Architectural—Pall Mall—Mechanics' Institute—The Town Hall—"Poppet-Heads."

FROM Melbourne, a ride "on the cars," as the Americans would say, of a fraction over a hundred miles, will bring the traveller to the prosperous city of Sandhurst, *alias* Bendigo, otherwise fondly and familiarly designated by its admiring inhabitants as Quartzopolis, or Queen of the Goldfields. It is a pleasant journey through country which is a fair sample of this thriving colony of Victoria. Our train, on leaving the metropolis, for a league or more pursues a course to the westward, on either side of the "track" passing the heterogeneous collection of "model suburban residences" which forms the usual feature of the outskirts of a great city. A gentle sweep to the right, and we turn our heads northwards, exchanging town for country. And a fair and smiling country it is, as it lies bathed in a flood of eternal sunshine, its huge fields dotted here and there with herds of fat cattle and white flocks of sheep, over which at intervals some giant gum—its life fast ebbing under the effect of the fatal "ring"—rears its gaunt and naked form. Is there anything more sadly depressing than the sight of those dead and dying trees? In some parts of Australia whole acres of them are to be seen—a veritable necropolis of eucalypti—a forest, if not a city, of the dead. *Cui bono?* do you say? The god of utility demands their massacre, the prince of the wool-sack decrees their fate, and a wave of the woodman's axe makes round their bark the ring which sooner or later kills them.

Meanwhile, the pace of the locomotive, hitherto rapid—for there is now an express service—has been slackening, and it is evident that we are ascending. Still distant is the hill itself, or rather mountain, for its altitude is set down as over 2,000 feet, and thus it becomes entitled to the more lordly name. Its name is Mount Macedon, one of the culminating peaks of the Dividing Range, the watershed of this part of Victoria. The train will creep slowly round its base, and then go swiftly down the incline on the other side. But first we glide past Sunbury, with the palatial residence of Sir W. Clarke, situated in the midst of a miniature English park; past Riddell's Creek, beloved by followers of old Izaak Walton; and past Gisborne. And now the height begins to tell, and we feel the breeze. A welcome coolness tempers the otherwise oppressive rays of the sun, and as we approach the mountain, glimpses are given of picturesque dwellings snugly ensconced amid its numerous gullies. Here is the summer mansion of the Governor, to which he is fain to escape when the heat and dust of Melbourne become well-nigh intolerable, and a lull in the press of official business permits of his temporary retirement. As the train hurries on, what name did we catch? Carlsruhe? When we look out, hardly the suspicion of a dwelling meets our inquiring gaze. Shades of the Fatherland, what has this "pocket-borough" in common with the fan-shaped capital of the Baden principality? Kyneton is the half-way house, and on that account has been made the refreshment station. From the station we descry a town half-buried in a wealth of "leafiness." Has some Netherlander been here to plant all these

poplars, or, perchance, some Fleming from the banks of the Scheldt, to whom the sight of the familiar tree recalls thoughts of his own native flats and quaint old Antwerp? Our stay is too brief to notice other than this salient feature, and after satisfaction given to the demands of the inner man, we prosecute our way.

The aspect of the country now alters. The main northern road skirts the railway line. How many hopeful hearts have trudged its weary miles excited by visions of a veritable El Dorado? How many saddened men have retraced its tortuous course, with leaden steps, downcast in spirit, broken in health, and ruined in estate? Some of the best blood of England—barristers and tradesmen, clergymen

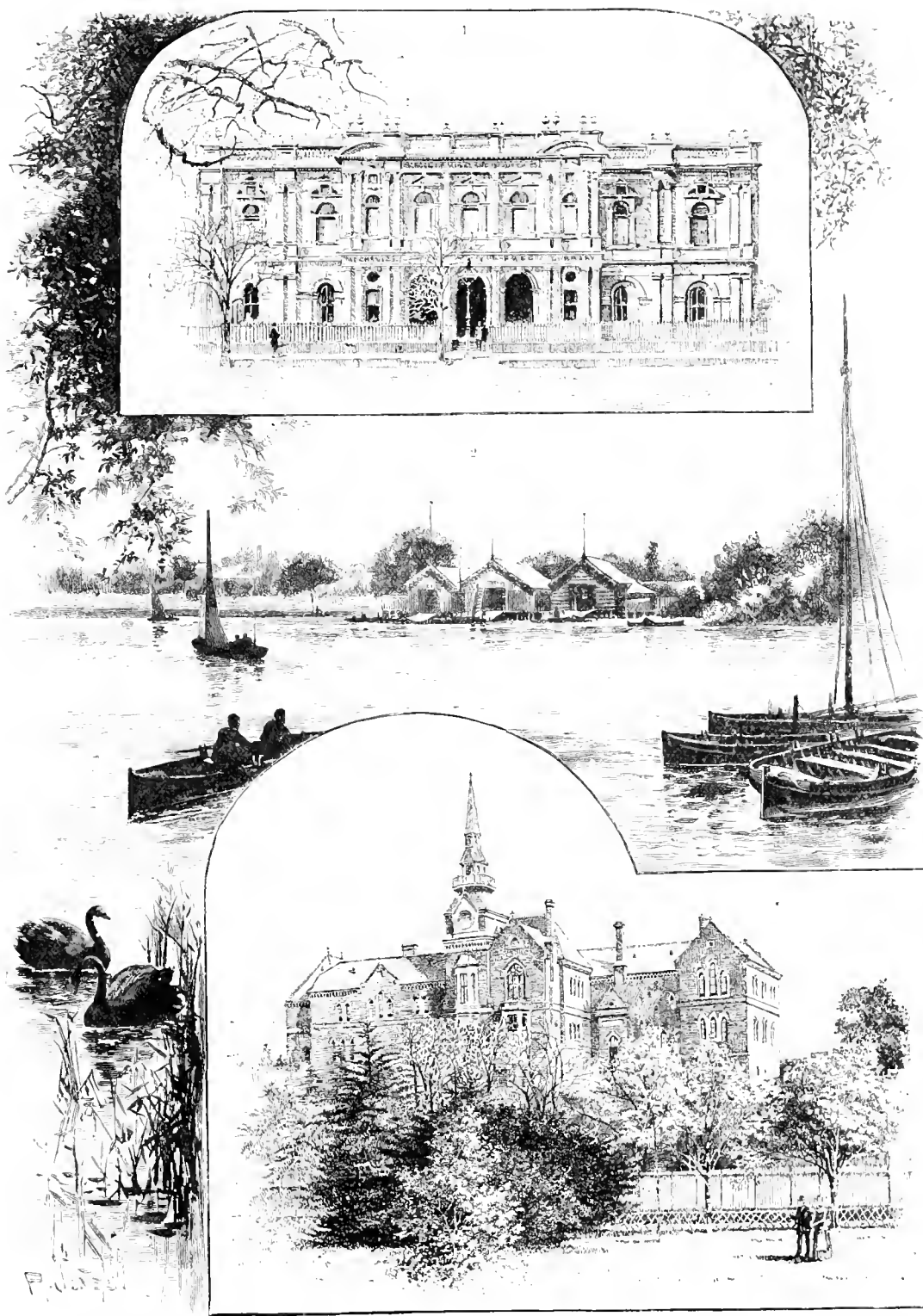
as well as scapegraces, spruce professional men and moiling mechanics—a motley crew if collected—wended side by side along that “diggers’ path” in the year of grace 1853 and its immediate successors. Gold was their magnet, a leviathan nugget the focus of their desire. The traces of their handiwork can be seen in the level tract of ground to the right, thickly pitted with quarry-holes, which give to it the appearance of having recently recovered from an acute attack of confluent variola. The plain is a gigantic honeycomb, composed of cells each of which—to carry out the analogy—has, at a recent date, contained at least one active denizen. We are close to the borough of Castlemaine, a town created by the “diggings”—a little faded now, it is true, from the bustling activity of those brisk and lively times, when the first mad “rush” was on, and the



THE FERNERY.

supply of gold was plentiful and continuous. A few poppet-heads mark spots where, by a more tedious process and with a less exciting result, the fascinating yellow metal is slowly unearthed. Our journey is almost at an end. We have no leisure now to inspect the quarries of Harcourt, supplying granite of a texture and hue equalling that of the famous Cumberland stone procured at the little village of Shap, a score of miles below the comely border town of Carlisle, in the old country. Soon all the indications of a great mining township appear—tall poppet-heads, the honeycombed ground and hungry-looking soil, the prevalence of dust and grime. Golden Square is the appropriate name of the station that comes immediately before Sandhurst.

The earlier name of the town was Bendigo. The origin of the designation is matter of dispute. There are those who maintain that it was taken from the well-known



1. THE SCHOOL OF MINES AND MECHANICS' INSTITUTE.
3. THE STATE SCHOOL.

2. LAKE WEERONA.

prize-fighter—rather an ominous origin for the quiet of the town. But others maintain that it is a corruption of *Bandicoot*, the old name of the Bendigo Creek. Probably the truest account is that to some of the earliest diggers the name Bendigo was more familiar than the name of the Australian animal. Hence arose the corruption, as sailors ignorant of mythology, yet unwilling that their ship's name should be meaningless, turn *Bellerophon* into "*Billy Ruffian*." About 1860 some military cadets, recently from Sandhurst, the military academy in Berkshire, were stationed in the place, and through their influence it was re-christened. In this way a name that at once suggests discipline has succeeded to a name with a very different connotation.

For the history of the place it may suffice the general reader to learn that Sandhurst owes its existence to the presence—within a very circumscribed area and in unusual abundance—of the precious ore which plays so important a rôle in the commercial currency of the world. As early as 1850 alluvial gold in small quantities was occasionally met with, but not until 1853 did the discovery assume such dimensions as to attract adventurers from all corners of the globe. Some years later, when the alluvial deposits had almost given out, Sir Roderick Murchison, the eminent geologist, from information received, and without even paying a visit to Australia, predicted the presence of gold in the quartz rock underground, and his prophecy was not long in being verified. An amphitheatre of low-lying hills surrounds an irregular basin not more than two miles in diameter. A sluggish stream, only to be dignified by the name of river on those rare occasions when its waters have been swollen into a rushing torrent, divides the enclosed area into two nearly equal halves. Its name—the Bendigo Creek—is a household word to all acquainted with the history of gold-finding; for along its banks some of the richest alluvial fields in the neighbourhood were situated, and the reminiscences of the "*canvas town*" which lined its sides are still green in the memory of many an old Bendigonian.

But times are changed. The Bendigo Creek remains, an unsightly ditch in the midst of a verdant park; but that is all. A fairy, it would seem, has been here, and with a touch of her magic wand has transformed the worm-eaten earth into a floral paradise. If anyone wishes to escape from the fiery darts of the broiling sun and to seek shelter from the furnace blast of the northern sirocco, a retreat is at hand. Here is the Fernery, magnificently and very artistically arranged, and very refreshing after the dust and dryness of the city around. Let us seat ourselves for a moment in this shady alcove. Ferns surround us on every side, from the tender maiden-hair to the towering, hardy tree-fern of New Zealand. The luxuriance of the tropics, the sober growth of more temperate climes, even the stunted offspring of a lower latitude, find a congenial home in this romantic spot. Could an old pioneer of '53 revisit for a moment the scene of his labours, he might well be excused for supposing that he had made a serious mistake, and entered, an unbidden guest, the secret sanctum of some modern dryad, where Pan and his attendants lurk behind the leafy fronds. Infinite care has to be bestowed upon the plants: copious and constant showers of water alone suffice to preserve the spring-like verdure of this sylvan bower. It may be asked, does it ever rain here? Assuredly it does; but the advent of the watery cloud is a very capricious

phenomenon. That turquoise sky, of a tint unmatched by even the lauded blue of Naples, is the familiar canopy; this atmosphere, clear and balmy as that of a Shetland summer eve, is the expected accompaniment of each recurring day. The climate of Sandhurst can fearlessly challenge comparison with that of any locality in the world. By its strongest admirers it is said to unite in its composition the particular attributes of many regions famous for their salubrity. You have the mellifluous softness of the Riviera without any of its attendant languor, the calm serenity of Madeira, the invigorating crispness and bracing ozone of the far-famed Engadine, the bright geniality and tropical warmth of Algiers and Morocco. Doctors often recommend consumptive patients to visit Sandhurst, especially in the winter. The heat of midsummer, it must be confessed, often proves a little distressing to individuals whose affinity to the salamander is not of the closest. But the thermometer does not often register 110° in the shade and 156° in the sun. Such days are the small fly in a fairly large pot of ointment; and if the testimony of our friend the "oldest inhabitant" is to be believed, their mitigation in regard both to number and severity is rapidly increasing. We can cheerfully endure their intensity, with the remembrance on the one hand and the prospect on the other of the resplendent weather which precedes and follows them.

Under the gracious influence of this benignant zone the vegetable kingdom blossoms forth with a rapidity and exuberance as startling as it is unexpected. A soil in itself more unpromising of fertility than the white and scar-seamed country environing Sandhurst could scarcely be imagined. Appearances in this case are deceitful. But scratch the earth, and it will respond to your effort with a winning readiness; use only a modicum of toil, and you will stimulate it into a true garden of the Hesperides. If anyone have a passion for the succulent fig, the full-flavoured peach, or the luscious grape, here the taste may be gratified to heart's content. Should a visitor further care to make himself acquainted with the process of distilling, from the juice of the latter, what Dick Swiveller used to term "the rosy," the vignerons of the neighbourhood will be delighted to afford an insight into the processes of an infant industry which is beginning to hold its place among the staples of the colony. A drive to a vineyard will amply repay the trouble, and on the way thither other marks of the soil's wonderful richness may be examined. The rulers of Sandhurst, wise in their generation, have taken advantage of this abnormal growth, and have relieved the monotony of city architecture by the intervention of public parks; and in modifying the bleak aspect of the streets by the cultivation of trees, they have availed themselves of the willing and spontaneous aid of "Mother Nature."

Like many Australian cities, Sandhurst is liberally supplied with lungs in the way of reserves. In the centre of the city, and forming what may be called the three sides of a hollow square, is the citizens' reserve, known as Rosalind Park. A small elevation—the Camp Hill—occupies the space thus enclosed, and on this commanding site stands a large and handsome State school. From the summit of its tower a complete and extensive view can be obtained, and on it we may fitly take our stand for a survey of the city, descending in spirit at intervals, when the spur of curiosity impels us, to a more minute examination of some prominent detail. The terrace in the foreground is Pall

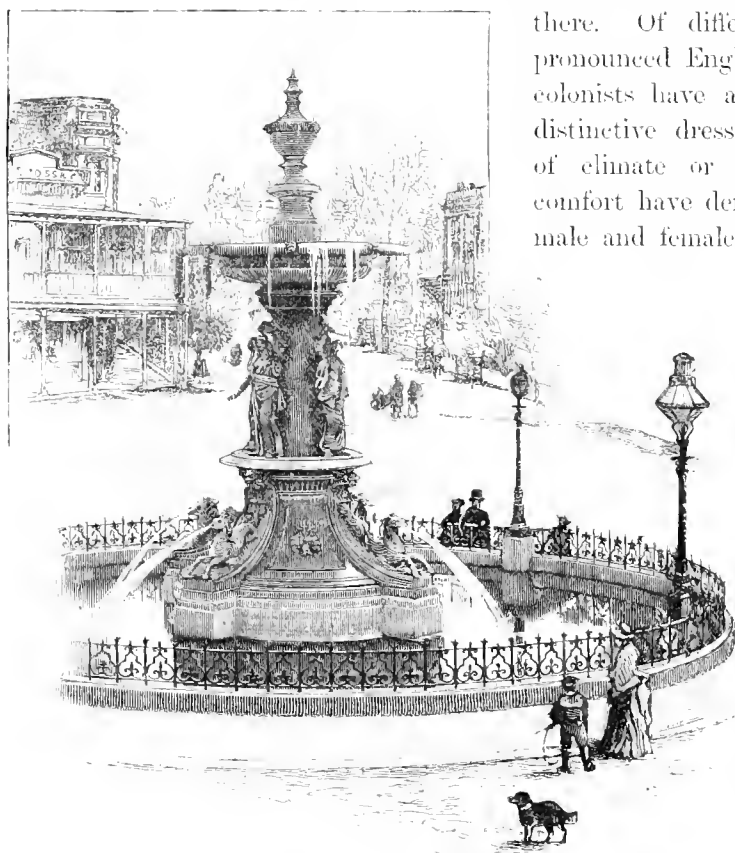
Mall, the principal street in the city. Every town has its favourite promenade, in Australian phraseology, its "block," where "on high days and holidays" its fair inhabitants "most do congregate." The "Mall" of the "forest city"—the pleasant name by which Lord Rosebery spoke of Sandhurst—can hardly vie in elements of the picturesque with the matchless Princes Street of Edinburgh, the shady Unter den Linden of Berlin, or the ever-changing Chiaja of Naples: nevertheless, it has its points of interest.

Let us choose a Saturday night for its perambulation. A ceaseless, shifting throng fills its broad roadway. The Exchange, albeit the business of the day is over, presents a large muster of its *habitués*, who are engaged in the relaxation of discussing the "returns" for the "off" or "on" week, as the case may be, or the prospect of a speedy rise in "Lazarus" or "United Devons." A large amount of wealth is "figured" in the persons of those plain and unassuming men. Now the stranger brushes shoulders with a millionaire, now with a fortunate speculator, whose venture in an unknown mine has turned up "trumps," and who has awakened some fine morning to find himself a second Cressus. But the crowd's "the thing." These placid Australian nights, lit with a fearless moon, are, in truth, a second day, and their sparkling brilliance tempts the wanderer out, an additional zest being lent to the excursion by the consideration

that all "the world and his wife" will be there. Of difference in costume from the pronounced English type there is little. The colonists have as yet assumed nothing of a distinctive dress beyond what the exigencies of climate or the promptings of material comfort have demanded. All are well dressed, male and female alike, and, in the case of the

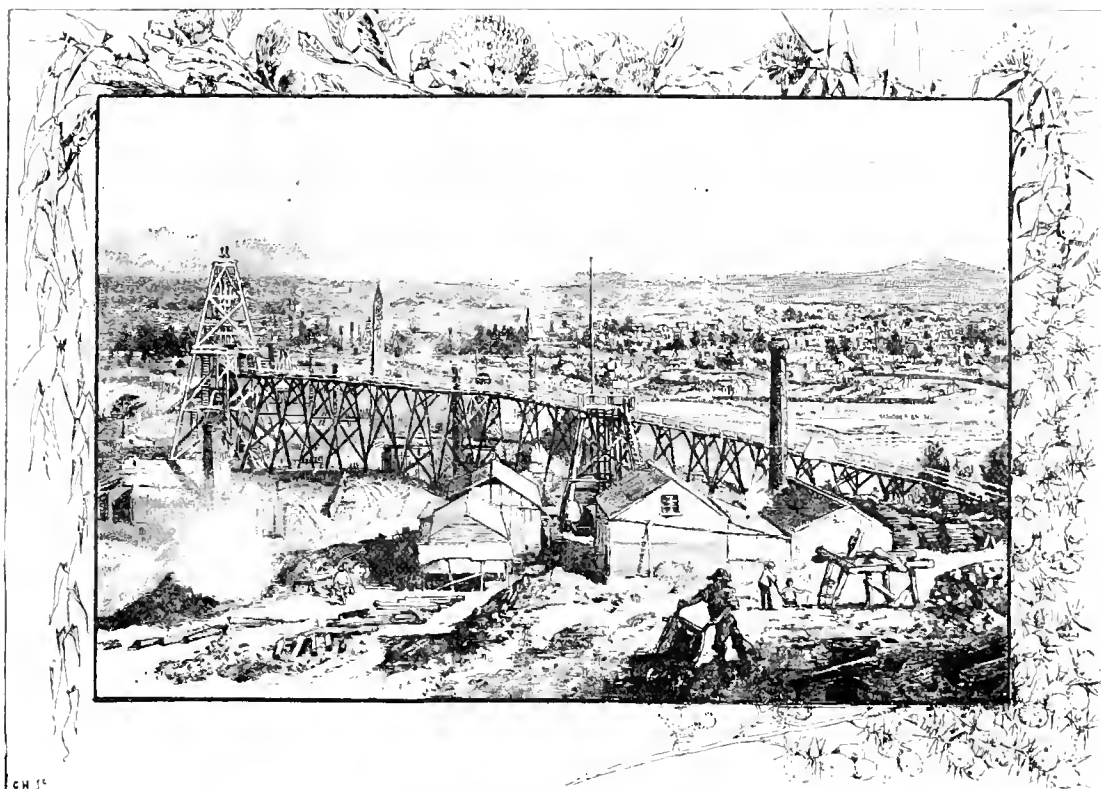
latter, one pauses to wonder upon the absence of that line of demarcation which enables you in England so directly to distinguish between the "domestic" and the lady "who doesn't work."

At the further end of the "Mall" the eye lights upon an imposing and commodious building—the Sandhurst Mechanics' Institute and School of Mines. The former is an amalgamation of the news exchange with the circulating library,



CHARING CROSS FOUNTAIN.

while the latter may be termed, in brief, a miniature and practical university. Both institutions are in receipt of a considerable subsidy from the Government, and have become valuable factors in the mental life of the community, the one disseminating a taste for reading, the other encouraging an acquisition of knowledge in those scientific matters most applicable to the special needs of the district. The buildings themselves, although admirably suited for their several purposes, can hardly be spoken of as pronounced



THE TOWN.

architectural successes, and it is possible, without in any degree "o'erstepping the limits of truth," to extend this comment to the majority of the public structures in the city. Whether it be, as Mr. George Augustus Sala remarks in reference to San Francisco, "that there is no recognised standard of architectural taste, or no central directing agency to control the vagaries of imperfectly educated architects," certain it is that the absence of unity in design and the general tawdriness and incongruity of detail are distressing to the eye, and perplexing to a cultivated sense. What has been happily designated by Mr. Sala the "packing box" order of architecture is fortunately not popular. The fault lies mainly in the admixture of widely dissimilar styles—ancient Doric with mediæval Gothic, the Renaissance with Scotch Baronial, the florid Tudor with the Neo-Byzantine. The Town Hall, formerly a huge unsightly pile, has now, at considerable cost, been rendered less obnoxious; the public buildings

close at hand are more indebted to their splendid site than to inherent merit for any effect they may produce; and the Masonic Hall, to the right of it, which repels the connoisseur by the heavy dulness of its Greek façade, may in some measure redeem its character by the airiness of its principal room, and the general fitness of its internal arrangements. The country is not old enough to have its heroes, nor, perhaps, has the stage of hero-worship been fully reached. A spasmodic effort in favour of the late General Gordon came to nought, and the city of Sandhurst still remains without a statue. The only adornment which it possesses is a fountain of elegant design, erected on the wide and open esplanade, and christened, in imitation of its famous London prototype, Charing Cross. The date of its construction corresponds with the visit to the gold-fields of the two sailor sons of the Prince of Wales, and on its face is suitably inscribed the name of that most beloved of English ladies, Alexandra, Princess of Wales.

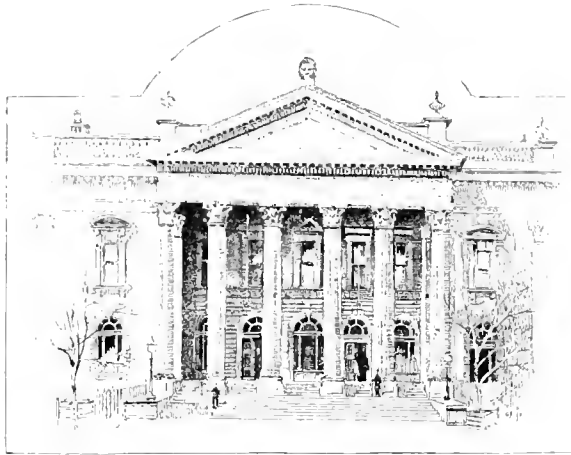
There is nothing in any of the churches of Sandhurst to call for special remark. What is far more pleasing to notice is the success which has attended the endeavour to soften the imperfect outlines of man's handiwork with the umbrageous foliage of a few of Nature's most lovely children. Trees are everywhere. The statistician gives the information that no less than seventy-five miles of streets are planted with shrubs. It is one perpetual boulevard. Could our ears only catch the accents of *la belle patrie*, we might fancy for a moment that we had "struck" an unfamiliar "patch" of the gay, mirthful city on the banks of the Seine. The illusion cannot be kept up. The dogged British breed does not take kindly to a foreign invasion, and the Frenchman's charming conception of life out of doors finds neither favour nor imitation in the estate of Captain Cook. There is not even a *petit soupçon* of *la vie Parisienne*. No gathering *en famille* round those social little tables on the sidewalk, where, after the heat of the day, *vermouth* or *café au cognac* is sipped, and the latest gossip lazily discussed, or the passers-by lightly criticised. No; John Bull prefers to stand, without his amiable encumbrances, smoking a strong cigar or a not too fragrant pipe, discussing politics or business with a friend.

The French have never emigrated in force enough to leaven with their customs and habits the society of the colonies. With the Germans it is much the same. They are present in considerable numbers, and a "Deutscher Verein" and other national institutions betray an attempt to preserve something at least from the hands of the Philistines; but where will you find a "Bier-garten"? The Australian-born children of Germans do not even speak German, and take to the strains of "Rule Britannia" as naturally as they do to their mothers' milk.

To our view of the city there is one detraction, one figure which will force itself upon the sight, whether we will or no. Dear to the hearts of hundreds are those hideous-looking poles, for are they not the door-posts and lintels to a *descensus Avernii* whence the adventurous visitor to the mansions of Pluto may return, if the gods be propitious, amid a shower of gold? They crop up in the most unexpected corners, sometimes as an ornamental adjunct to the domestic scullery, sometimes as an effective offset to the gentle monotony of the front lawn. Doughty opponents they would have seemed for the spear of the gallant knight of La Mancha. "Poppet-heads" is the almost

affectionate name for the large beams that support the winding wheels over the shaft of a mine. The highest "poppet-heads" in Sandhurst are those of Claim 222, belonging to the king of mining speculators, Mr. George Lansell. This mine derives its curious name from the fact that it extends for 222 feet along the line of reef. A perilous climb it is to the top of these gigantic beams, but one amply repaid by the width and diversity of the view. Towards the north the prospect embraces a new area. An almost continuous line of "poppet-heads" stretches as far as eye can see. Populous suburbs of Sandhurst lie within these limits, Ironbark, Long Gully, California Gully, ending with the flourishing mining township of Eaglehawk, a "model burgh," and the would-be rival of the larger city.

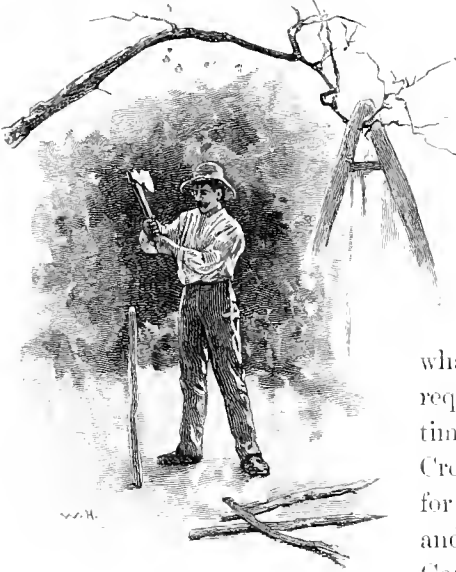
Taking it all in all, Sandhurst is an exceedingly prosperous town. The population may be roughly estimated at 30,000; and with the great advantages and capabilities of the place, a steady growth and continued prosperity may be safely predicted. At the distance of a mile to the westward lies a small artificial sheet of water formed out of ground which was formerly part of the alluvial diggings. Lake Weeroona is a rendezvous for the knights of the oar, and at all times, and especially on Sundays, enthusiastic devotees may be observed transacting the rites of their worship.



THE MASONIC HALL.

FREE SELECTION AND FREE SELECTORS.

Land Acts—The "Land Scramble"—Litigations—"Pegging Out"—Fencing—The House—"Ring Barking"—"Dummies"—"Burning Off"—Changing Places—Profit and Loss—Education.



PEGGING OUT.

FREE selector is one who takes possession of unoccupied Crown land subject to certain conditions, upon fulfilment of which he obtains in due course a lease or Crown grant of his holding, or some portion thereof. He receives his name from the fact that he is at liberty to select freely, from the whole area of land open for the purpose, whatever block seems to him most suitable for his requirements, whether such land be or be not at the time occupied by a squatter as tenant-at-will of the Crown. Fresh areas are continually being thrown open for selection by proclamation of the Governor-in-Council, and due notice of the fact is given in the Government Gazette and the other colonial newspapers, while maps showing the country still available, the nature of its soil, and other material facts with regard to it, can be

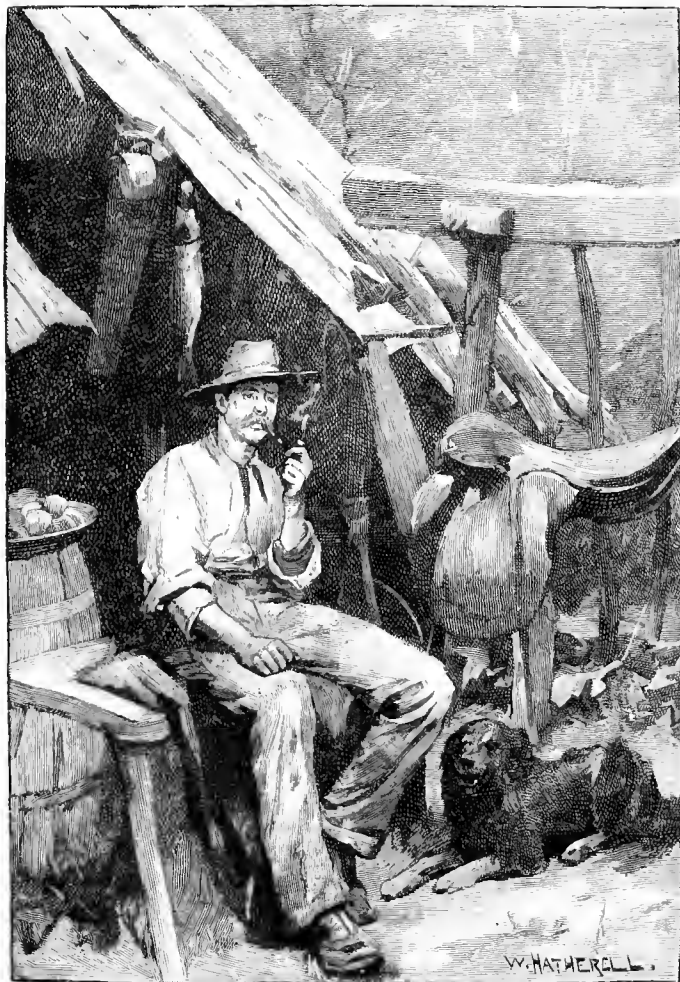
seen at the central or local offices of the Crown Lands Department.

The principle of selection is one that has been adopted by all the Australian governments, their object being to attract men who will go out into the unreclaimed bush and open it up to civilisation, and by-and-by develop into a class of small landed proprietors, who shall be politically a check upon the large holders on the one hand, and on the other hand, having themselves a certain stake in the country, shall counter-balance the Radical and Communistic tendencies of the proletariat of the large towns; and, further, who from a social point of view shall supply the country with a sober and steady yeoman population, such as it has been so often the despairing wish of politicians, both practical and theoretical, to obtain.

The special conditions of selection vary in the different colonies, and according to the particular Land Act under which the holding is taken up; and as the colonial Parliaments are continually tinkering with the land laws, and pass a fresh statute on the subject every two or three years, the terms upon which selections are held vary almost as much as in the case of land leased from private individuals. Thus, in Victoria, under the Land Act of 1869, 320 acres was the maximum that any person might select, and of this, upon payment of £1 an acre extending over a period of twenty years, and conditionally upon *personal residence* and upon the expenditure of £1 per acre in improvements, he was entitled to an absolute grant from the Crown. Under a later Act the land in the colony open to selection is divided into four,

classes: (1) pastoral, (2) agricultural and grazing, (3) swamp, and (4) auriferous. The two last of these classes may be passed over without much remark, as selection upon them is comparatively rare, and in the case of auriferous land is confined to small areas, and subject to conditions relative to mining.

The blocks of country set apart for pastoral selection consist chiefly of inferior



AT HOME.

land suitable only for grazing purposes. The selector of such land is allowed to take up a sufficient number of acres to pasture 4,000 sheep or 500 head of cattle, for which he pays an annual rent of one shilling per head for sheep and five shillings per head for cattle. For the first six years he is a mere licensee, but at the end of that time, if he have duly paid his rent and conformed to the other conditions, he is entitled to a lease for the remaining fourteen years. The land, however, never becomes his own, as in the case of the selector under the Act of 1869, and to a certain extent in

the case of one who selects an agricultural and grazing block under the more recent Act. The former is in fact a squatter on a small scale, and never obtains more than an estate for a term of years in his land, or, as it is legally termed, a mere chattel interest as distinct from a freehold.

Accordingly, the more usual form of selection under the Act is that of a block of the class called "agricultural and grazing" country, which comprises the greater part of the best Crown land still remaining. This is divided into blocks of not more and usually much less than 1,000 acres. As in the case of the selector of a pastoral block, the selector of land of this class will obtain first a license, and subsequently a lease, subject to the payment of rent and compliance with conditions for improvement and other regulations; and of this he will, if he have not already selected under one or other of the previous Land Acts, be allowed to choose 320 acres, which will eventually become his own, and of which he will, in legal phrase, obtain the fee simple upon terms similar to those of the Act of 1863, under which, by the way, by far the greater part of the selected land of Victoria has been taken up.

It is obtaining the land absolutely for one's own that makes this form of selection so attractive. Those most eager in the "land scramble" belong to the Irish and Scottish labouring classes. Large numbers of men of this kind are settled over Australia, and for the most part make excellent colonists, one of their chief failings being extreme tenacity as to their rights as landed proprietors, and a tendency to impound their neighbours' sheep or cattle in the event of a trespass, a tendency that leads to considerable litigation in the local courts, where the eccentricities of the parties are often the cause of much amusement. The writer remembers to have been present upon one occasion when a man of this sort, whose speech betrayed his Celtic origin, laid a complaint against the poundkeeper, and sought to have him fined under the Impounding Act for exceeding his authority, an offence which, if proved, would have involved a penalty of £20. The excess of authority consisted in the unfortunate official having good-naturedly released from the pound a bull belonging to the complainant upon payment of a small sum, when he should strictly under the Act have charged him £5! It is perhaps unnecessary to add that the learned magistrate dismissed the case, citing an analogous English decision, where a prisoner convicted of an offence for which the penalty was imprisonment and a flogging, not only got out of gaol, but also sued the justices, on the ground that they had not ordered him to be flogged, "whereby," as the declaration set forth, "the plaintiff hath sustained damage"!

The land laws of the other Australian colonies, though differing from those of Victoria in respect of details, are similar in the main principles, though of course in the less settled colonies larger areas are offered for selection, and, if possible, on easier terms. Thus, in the Eastern district of New South Wales, the selector can take up as much as 640 acres, and in South Australia 1,280 acres, whilst in Queensland and Western Australia, with their enormous territory and sparse population, blocks of immense extent are offered on the easiest terms imaginable. In considering the value of a selection, however, its accessibility is of course to be taken into account, even more

than its size or stock-carrying capabilities. A very paradise would be of little value if situated in the middle of the Great Sahara.

Nor is there less diversity in the mode of life of the selector in different parts of the colonies than in the laws and regulations under which he holds his land. The life that he will lead, the work that he will do, his comforts and his discomforts, will be very different on a selection in the Wimmera or Northern Plains from what they would be in the heavily-timbered parts of Gippsland or the Otway forest. In the former he has little more to do than fence in his newly-acquired land and break up the soil with the plough; in the latter he has literally to hew his way with his axe into the heart of some of the thickest forests on earth. Indeed, so different are the circumstances of the two holdings that there is hardly an operation common to both.

The first thing the selector has to do after fixing upon a piece of country is to peg it out. This is effected by driving pegs into the ground at the angles of the selection, and at intervals along its boundaries, and should be done with great care, otherwise he may lose the best part of his intended block. He then lodges with the local land officer a formal application to be allowed to select this land, which he identifies by reference to the official maps, at the same time paying a small deposit. The application is submitted by the officer to the local land board, which, in case it should approve of the application, forwards it on with an endorsement to that effect to the Minister of Lands for the colony, by whom it is almost invariably ratified, and a license issued to the applicant to occupy the land in question. Should the application be refused, the deposit paid to the land officer is returned. The next thing for the selector to do after obtaining his license is to get his selection surveyed by an authorised surveyor, which will probably cost him about £8, more or less, according to circumstances. Meantime he will of course have run up some sort of a shed or dwelling-house, and commenced to enclose his selection with a fence of some kind. Many of these fences are very weak affairs indeed, consisting merely of cut scrub and undergrowth heaped together. This is called a bush fence. Log fences are also much employed where timber is plentiful, and consist, as their name implies, of logs piled together and rolled one upon another. A log fence is a formidable obstacle, as will be soon apparent to anyone who tries to jump a horse over it. More often, however, fences of posts and rails or posts and wire are made use of, as being more effective, and affording less harbour to rabbits and other vermin, besides being less liable to destruction by fire, a danger to which the Australian fence is much exposed.

The character of the building that the selector will put up as a dwelling will, of course, depend upon his circumstances, and whether he has a wife and family; but as he is entitled to include the cost of the building in the "improvements" which the law requires him to make upon his holding before obtaining his lease, it is usual to erect a fairly substantial hut almost at once, which is afterwards frequently converted into a kitchen, other living rooms being erected in front of it as they are required. In this way many selectors gradually make for themselves very comfortable homes, but the house of the struggling man just settled upon the land and hard pressed for ready

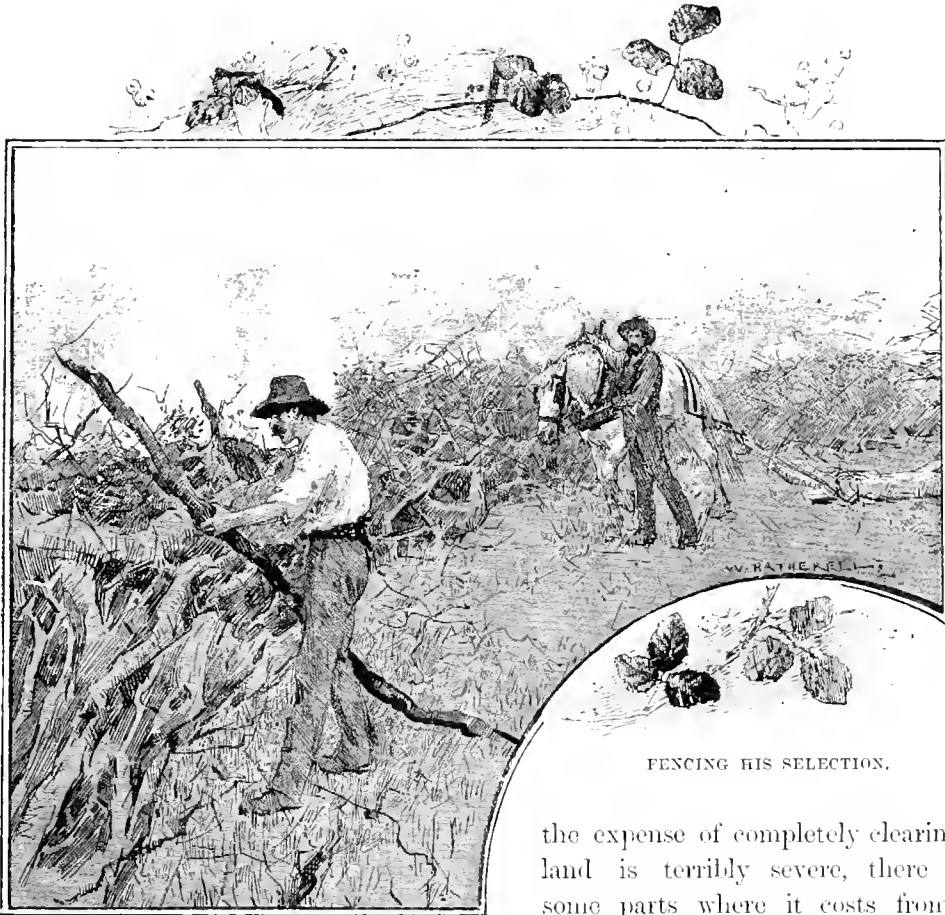
cash is often a mere bark shed, or for a time even a tent is made to do duty, whilst his food consists chiefly of damper. This damper is merely flour and water made into a dough, and baked in the ashes of a wood fire.

When a man with a wife and family and some little capital selects, he usually goes up first himself, and at once begins erecting for them a more or less substantial house, probably laying out at the same time a small garden to grow vegetables, &c. As soon as this is completed he brings them up and settles them in it, and is thus enabled to do his fencing and other improvements under far less disagreeable conditions, having a pleasant home and comfortable meals to return to at the end of his day's work. His sons also as they grow up assist him in working the place, whilst the daughters help their mother to attend to the cows, pigs, and fowls, and thus enable him to make something by his dairy. In time, the boys will probably take up selections for themselves in the same locality, and, if possible, adjacent to that of their father; whilst the girls will make good wives for the neighbouring selectors, or will go out to service. This last, however, does not very often happen, as the Australian working classes have strong ideas on the subject of social equality. So the selector's girls object to "service," not so much disliking the house work, to which they are accustomed from their infancy, but affronted at not being allowed to sit at dinner with the squatter's "young ladies." It is, moreover, undeniable that in the colonies the line of class distinction is by no means strongly marked, and the squatter on the next station, though he could write a cheque for thousands at a minute's notice, may have begun life as a cowboy, and may still have a cowboy's ideas and feelings, whilst the struggling owner of the selection on the outskirts of his run may be a gentleman of refinement and education, and his wife the descendant of a line of earls.

The construction of the house, of course, varies according to the taste and means of the selector; frequently it is a weather-board cottage with a roof of corrugated iron, and where clay is available, the chimneys and floor will often be of brick. Another method of building is by letting slabs cut smooth on one side into grooves cut in the upright posts, a plan known as "round horizontals." Where possible, the dwelling is placed on the bank of a creek, lake, river, or else a dam is made or well is sunk at a convenient distance, but occasionally water has to be carted for miles, especially in seasons of drought.

The selector, having now got his house built, and his garden safe in a rabbit-proof fence, will set to work in earnest upon the selection itself. Having enclosed it with a substantial fence all round, he next proceeds to divide it off into separate paddocks, and to prepare for the plough such portions as he intends to place under cultivation. In order to do this he will first have to get rid of the trees, which suck from the soil the nutriment that should go to support his crops. This is usually effected by the process known as "ring-barking," which consists in removing from the tree, at a few feet from its base, a stripe of bark about a foot wide. This prevents the sap from rising up through the bark to the upper part of the tree, which accordingly withers and dies; the limbs gradually fall, and at the end of some years the trunk comes crashing to the ground. In heavily-timbered country, where many acres have been

ring-barked, you may hear day and night, all the year round, at intervals of a few minutes, the noise of the falling limbs, whilst an occasional roar like thunder proclaims the fall of some monarch of the forest "rung" many years before. Even in tolerably lightly-timbered country ring-barking is said to increase the carrying capacity of the land for grazing purposes a hundred per cent., and where the trees are thick the improvement in the fertility of the soil is, of course, much greater. In such places



FENCING HIS SELECTION.

the expense of completely clearing the land is terribly severe, there being some parts where it costs from £10 to £12 per acre to prepare the land

for the plough. It is usual, after a few years, when most of the limbs have fallen, to collect and burn these, leaving the trunks to fall later on. Where there is a thick scrub or undergrowth, as in parts of Gippsland, this is first cut and left upon the ground, the timber being "rung." After being allowed to dry for a year or two, a day is chosen at the end of summer, and it is set on fire. This is called a "burning off." A large "burn-off" is really a magnificent spectacle. The scene resembles Doré's realistic illustration of Dante's Inferno. Acres upon acres over which the flames have passed are still aglow; the trees, with stems and branches blazing in all manner of beautiful and fantastic shapes, darting out tongues of

flame from every crevice and cranny, tower aloft, masses of incandescant charcoal, and as they topple over with a crash that resounds above the noise of the flames, send up showers of sparks to heaven; whilst far away, driven before the wind, with howl and crackle, and roar, rush the retreating waves of fire, hastening onward for fresh prey. The men from the nearest selections have come to bear a hand, and keep the fire from their own and their neighbours' fences; for should the wind change, or should the fire overleap the bounds assigned to it and choose another track, damage to the extent of thousands of pounds might be caused in a few hours, not to mention the danger to their homesteads, with their wives and children. They are the fire-tamers, the fearless holders of the magic lamp of knowledge and the ring of prudence, who keep the terrible genie in check, and make him do their work: and weird and ghastly they look as they flit darkly along the outskirts of the burning area. Altogether, it is a scene that strikes with awe and wonder anyone beholding it for the first time, for its weirdness is enhanced by the solitude of the bush, and the absence of the bustle and rushing to and fro which distinguish a large conflagration in the city.

The selector, even more than the squatter, should be a veritable Jack-of-all-trades; for whereas it is sufficient for the latter to *understand* the different operations of carpenter, blacksmith, saddler, and plumber, in order to direct his men in their proper performance, the farmer, having usually no one except his sons to assist him, must be equipped with the practice as well as the theory. At the same time, no very high degree of excellence in these crafts is required, bush carpentering and farriery being of the roughest possible description, strength alone being aimed at, and elegance at a discount.

The selector, moreover, should be a *handy* man, to whom nothing comes amiss, and should, of course, be a thoroughly practical farmer, and a good judge of all kinds of stock. The raw, unexperienced man, or in colonial parlance, the "new chum," who rashly takes up a selection without any previous training or knowledge of the sort of life he will have to lead, will almost certainly end in disaster, and if he be at the commencement a small capitalist, in a few years there is likely to be very little of his "small capital" remaining, or if remaining, it will most likely have been transferred to the pockets of his more astute neighbours. An old German colonist, a shrewd and thoroughly practical man, having entered into partnership with such a one in a selection, gave the following pithy account of the transaction:—"Six years ago I had de experience and he had de capital: now I have de capital and he has de experience!" Some of these "new-chum" selectors go into the bush expecting to find there all the characteristics of a fashionable watering-place. One young gentleman even announced that he "intended to have plenty of society in the bush," and to that end proposed to construct a *ballroom* and a *tennis-court* immediately on his arrival on his selection, which was in the heart of the primeval forest.

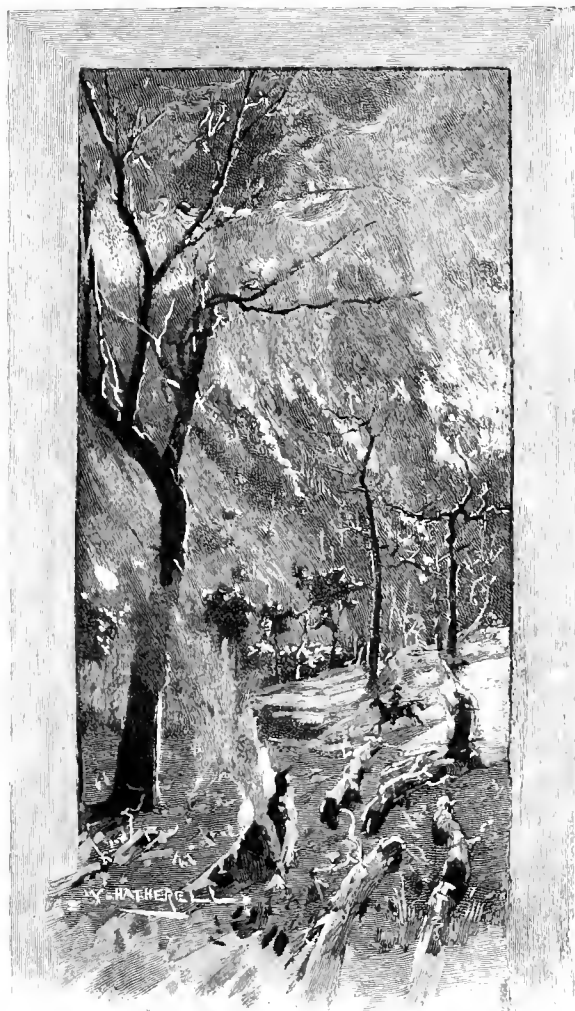
After having resided upon his holding as a licensee for a term (usually of six years), the selector obtains from the local land officer a certificate that he has made improvements to the value required by law: he is then entitled to have a lease issued

to him. This is a great benefit, as it frees him from the onerous necessity of continual residence upon his selection, and enables him to raise money upon it either by sale or mortgage—a permission of which he is not generally slow to take advantage. Sometimes a squatter induces someone to select for him some coveted piece of land contiguous to his run, upon the understanding that he shall deliver it over as soon as he obtains the lease. This is called “dummying,” and the selector under such conditions is called a “dummy.” The practice is, of course, illegal, as being directly opposed to the public policy of the colonies, and is guarded against by stringent enactments; but even these have not been able to entirely put a stop to it, though it is far less common now than it was a few years ago. Often, too, a selector will take up land with the intention of making himself so obnoxious that the adjacent squatter will be glad to buy him out at his own price, a stratagem once frequently practised, though, warned by experience, the squatters have taken care where possible to secure all the best parts of their holdings, or as it is called, “to pick the eyes out of their runs.” The writer has known an instance of one unlucky squatter who had his horse paddock selected right up to his front door. Nor does this kind of selector usually stop at trifles to effect his object; he steals the squatter’s sheep, appropriates or “duffs” his cattle, leaves his gates open, and impounds his stock, and becomes such a thorn in the side of his richer neighbour that the latter is at last glad to pay any price to get rid of him. Such practices as these in years gone by made the very name of selector hateful to station-holders and their managers, and there was dire war between them; but a better spirit now prevails, and the two classes pull fairly well together. Indeed, many selectors during a portion of the year work for squatters, especially at shearing time, and thus make enough to support themselves during the remainder of the year. In some districts, too, the selector will make a good profit by splitting timber for palings, or cutting firewood for sale at the nearest town; and he will often purchase a bullock-team and earn good wages as a bush carrier.

There is a prevalent idea that the selector, by reason of the smallness of his holding, is debarred from making good profit by sheep farming. This, according to experience, is erroneous. The fact is that sheep farming can be successfully followed on areas of 640 or even 320 acres, and even land that has been exhausted by constantly being kept under crops, and upon which, in consequence, the selector has been able barely to earn a livelihood, has, by being sown with English or other grasses, or used as pasture for a few years, been improved and restored to its former excellence, the selector in the meanwhile earning a fair living from the wool and increase of his sheep. As these small holdings generally have more or less easy access to a market, it usually pays the selector to breed his sheep with a view to mutton rather than to wool, and with this view he generally prefers the Lincoln, the cross-bred, or other large-framed sheep, rather than the pure merino of the squatter, who keeps sheep for their wool alone.

Even when his land is cleared and his lease obtained, the selector’s troubles are by no means over. To him, as to the squatter, dingoes and rabbits are terrible foes, and the wallaby (a sort of small kangaroo) and other marsupials make sad havoc of his crops. The ravages committed by rabbits are very great, whole districts being eaten bare by

them, so much so that the legislatures of New South Wales, Victoria, and New Zealand have passed Acts to accomplish their destruction, but they breed so rapidly that these have hitherto been of little avail. In Queensland they have no rabbits, but the marsupials there are a great pest, and a Marsupial Act has been passed with a view to their extermination. Terrible stories, too, are told of the losses by floods of selectors



"BURNING OFF."

settled along the banks of the larger rivers, and by fire in the densely timbered country, such as the Cape Otway forest. Both flood and fire inflict damage to the extent of many thousands of pounds, bringing ruin to hundreds of families, besides being often attended with loss of life.

Though the selector's life is undoubtedly one of hardship, and sometimes of danger, to an enterprising and industrious man it has great charms, offering, as it does, a prospect of becoming in a few years comparatively rich. Besides this, it is free, healthy, and independent. Moreover, the selector has the satisfaction of knowing that every stroke of work that he does is for his own benefit; and if industrious and energetic, he has the almost certain prospect of one day becoming the owner of the land he tills, a pleasure denied to the labourer or tenant farmer at home. Many a selector who has taken up his land almost without a penny has brought up a large family upon it and died a wealthy man, though under ordinary circumstances he can hardly look forward to more than a moderate competence as a return for much hard work.

Meantime his children grow up around him able to handle horses and cattle almost as well as their father. From an early age they begin to make themselves useful about the place, and at eighteen, the age at which the law allows them to take up a selection for themselves, they are usually well able to manage it to the best advantage. Nor is their education neglected in the meanwhile. In districts the most remote, wherever a score or so of children can be collected within a radius of five or six miles, the admirable system of State education which prevails throughout the colonies provides a school, and

such schools are much on a par with those for children of the same class in England, while the general standard of education is considerably higher. Whether or not it is desirable that religious instruction should be given in State schools was for a long time a vexed question, and is still occasionally raised, but in spite of the energetic protests of the ministers of various denominations, the general sense of the community seems to be against it, and the State education of the colonies conforms to the ideas of the more Radical section of the community, being free, secular, and compulsory.



"RINGING."

LORNE.

A Great Plain—Gum Trees and Wattle—Unknown Depths—The Sea—Solitude—The Hotels—Balsam—Mount St. George—The Cumberland Caves—Along the Shore—The Erskine Falls—"Bushed"—The Fire Fiend—Straw's Falls—Paradise.

THE train that has brought us from Melbourne has sped for eighty miles through one long level of grassy plain, "save where, full five good miles away, the You-Yangs towered from out the green," and where, with one momentary gleam of sunlit blue, Corio Bay flashed by. At Birregurra, where the coaches await us, still the same great plain stretches around; but away to the south rise the purple ridges which guard the seaward-gazing gorges of Lorne. For twelve miles the road winds through barely undulating grass-land, dotted everywhere, like an English park, with the blackwood which, more than any other Australian tree, recalls the elm. Except for the fences, there is scarcely a sign of human occupation; homesteads are few and far between. There are thousands of sheep grazing on these plains; but we scarcely see any, for they are sheltering from the burning sun. The white sent of a rabbit goes flashing through the bracken: snowy clouds of cockatoos sail away amid the tree-tops; we may even catch sight of a hunted kangaroo, clearing fence and fallen timber in his tireless leap.

But, after the half-way hostelry where the travellers make terrific onslaught on the groaning board, the scene is wholly changed. The ascent of the ranges has begun. It is a six-mile climb. We look back upon the great plain that stretches beneath us away to the horizon, like a misty blue sea, without a break in its vast monotony, save for one or two lone heights that rise, like purple shadows, far away where the distance melts into cloudland. The forest-clad ridges slope down on either hand, with deep clefts parting them, and rounded basins of billowy green. The gnarled and twisted gum-tree of the plains disappears, and still, as we mount, huger and huger rise the forest giants, leafy towers whose crests, like cloud-wreaths afar up, wave to and fro. The perfume of the golden wattle fills the air, and bright flowers, strange to English eyes, gleam amid coral-fern and grassy tussock. The gorges on either side of the road grow steeper; precipice-like, they descend through deepening gloom, till the eye can pierce no further into the sombre tangle where the dense-thronging tree-trunks rise out of the undergrowth, close-ranged as the fencing palisades of some forest-fort of Titans. And, anon, amid those mighty shafts, we see what seem like palm-trees in slender stem and feathery crest; but they are crowned with fresher, brighter green than any palm. These are the first of the tree-ferns—the outposts of that army which spreads its clouds of skirmishers all along the hill-sides, but masses its mightiest force, as in secret ambush, deep amid the shadows of sunless gullies.

At last we gain the summit of the central ridge: but there is no far-reaching view of hazy plain to northward, or of gleaming sea to southward; for the giants of the forest stand up on every hand, with trunks twenty feet in girth, and with crests swaying in the breeze from two to three hundred feet overhead.

Down we plunge, at a swinging trot, over a road guiltless of macadam, where the coach rocks as we sweep round sharp turns, and we marvel how the horses can keep their footing on gradients where the passengers are fain to hold on with tense muscles, lest they suddenly dive headlong. A sideward glance down the sheer slope, that sinks to unknown depths, is apt to call up in one's memory stories of coaches that have toppled over like perilous verges and gone rolling over and over in dire confusion till arrested, with an awful crash, against some massy buttress of timber. But the face of our Jehu is "a light of safety;" his eye beams reassurance. No black care sits behind that horseman, at least. If you cautiously question him as to the frequency of accidents on this road, he will tell you that Mountjoy Brothers, who run these coaches, have never had an accident. Some sordid souls, indeed, who ere-while essayed to run an opposition line, went over, in hideous ruin, to the fate that they merited—even they and all such as put their trust in them; but—and here he describes to you the state of the road as it once was, when there was some credit in driving safely. Thus assured that these are the very piping times of peace in mountain coach-travel, your soul hath calm.

The vivid green of ti-*serub*, and the downy blue of young gum-leaves, brightening venerable trunks dark with scars of ancient fires, flit past; the aromatic sprays of the peppermint brush our faces, as we dash by with quickening speed; the blue sky, sleeping in front between the tree-tops, seems suddenly to stretch downwards, as though the heaven were coming to meet the earth, or as if we had come to the verge of the world, and were about to launch over into empty space, for the blue is right beneath us—but it is the sea!

The mountain-road ends abruptly with the steepest plunge and sharpest turn of all, and we are rolling along a green lane, with blossomed boughs meeting overhead. The hoofs flash through a ford, where a stream issues from a mountain gorge, to brawl over pebbles, to broaden into a still lagoon, to cleave through sand a narrow channel, and finally "to mingle with the bounding main."

And this is Lorne! It is but a hamlet of scattered homesteads nestling amongst the trees—a slender crescent of thinly-wooded land, with half a hundred acres of clear level meadow hard down by "the surgy murmurs of the lonely sea." The dark woods bend round protectingly, shutting out the unrestful world; there is peace in the very sight of it. It has not grown fast—thank Heaven!—nor soon do we look to see it vulgarised by "terraces," and robbed of its birthright in Arcadia by an esplanade. A score or so of years ago, a solitary settler, scouring the trackless ranges for lost cattle, descended on this fairy bay. The quiet solitude haunted him till he gathered his herd on its narrow pastures, and there he lived till some journalist, on whom the monotony of Queenscliff and Sorrento had palled, discovered him. Thereafter, year by year, the rough weather-board homestead grew to meet the wants of the gathering host of guests, extending its casual octopus limbs to right and left, and soaring at last into a goodly pile of masonry—and, behold, an hotel! and men named it "Erskine House." Then, emulous, rose another, in American magnificence of encircling balconies, broad staircases, and echoing halls, standing stately on a windy foreland, with the sea at its feet burling

cataract sheets of foam over a long, low reef. It looks far out over the Southern Ocean; but the great *lucus a non lucendo* is an inspiration still, and it is named the "Pacific Hotel." There is a third hostelry yet, shrinking back into the arms of the forest, embowered in greenery—the "Lorne Hotel."

Let us climb the long hill that rises up behind. In a moment you are in the heart of the woods. Dwellings of men have disappeared; even the presence of the sea is but revealed by a long, low murmur, like voices in a dream. The slope is steep, and the bracken dense around our knees; but already the balsam that breathes from the eucalyptus is in our lungs, and "not poppy nor mandragon"—no, nor the Indian's mysterious coca—is so potent to cast out pain of toil and sense of weariness. The weakest feel strong at Lorne, and labour has nowise ceased to be a pleasure when we stand upon the ridge. A narrow path, like a sheep-track, winds away up the forest-aisle to the brow of the hill. On the left, the wayfarer beholds the blue water—the sea, fringed with bright foam, and glorious with crashing breakers and sheeted ghosts of spray. In a broad half-circle the crest spreads out, headland peeping forth behind bold headland; sheer mountain-sides towering up from the purple sea, flecked with sunlight and barred with shadow; stern cliffs, and openings of delicious bays; and as the eye yearns over all this beauty, there breathes a music from it, long to haunt the chambers of hearing—the organ-tones of nature. To the right, from the great central range, the league-long ridges, like the fingers of a hand, slope downward, with deep gorges between. The terraced tiers of forest-trees rise each behind each, melting into hazy blue and ethereal purple, and, far away, the long, waving line of the Otways, dreaming against the summer heaven.

But our hill-path ends abruptly, and so steeply descends the slope that it seems as if one might cast a stone into the little river that gleams five hundred feet below in that narrow valley—nay, rather, that green basin between the hills: for they rise up sheer on all sides, the huge mass of Mount St. George in front, and to right and to rearward a tangled maze of lesser heights, dipping their feet in the stream, and mantling their brows with shaggy greenery. You shall not lightly look on a fairer scene; for this that we stand upon is the famous "Teddy's Look-out." Why "Teddy's" no one knows.

We descend the hill—a veritable "Hill Difficulty" at this end—and leap or ford the St. George Creek, as tide shall serve, and strain through bracken and bush up the opposite slope, not without wary watch of stirring grass for snakes—for snakes assuredly there are, albeit imagination bodies forth many more than you shall ever see with corporeal eye—and, striking a sheep-track, follow it round the shoulder of the hill, till we cross a rocky ravine. A few minutes' desperate scramble up the further face, amid boulders and crumbling earth—then, victorious but panting, we address us to the long, steady climb to the summit of Mount St. George. This hillside was heavily timbered once; but, years ago, all the trees were "rung," and now like tall white spectres they stand, an exceeding great army, stretching to the sky what seem anguish-writhen arms of mute appeal against man, who has blasted their youth and bared them of their glory. The fresh breeze meets you with new life on its wings as you win the summit. The forest-battalions sweep down beneath your feet in stately ranks to the foam-fringed bay; the eye ranges over thirty miles of coast, from the Eagle Rock—that seems in the misty

distance like a noble ship in full sail—to Mount Defiance southward, huge and dark, with well-nigh perpendicular sides, forest-clad to the water's edge.

In this direction lie the Cumberland Caves, to be reached by four miles' journeying over slant rock-shelves and craggy reefs, that run down, like cross-walls, to the sea. Here the sleepless waves are for ever hurling themselves on skerry and bold-upstanding scaur, and rushing up the long, deep, narrow chasms. We cross the mouth of the



BROKEN WATER, LORNE.

Cumberland Creek, which, a little distance inland, comes forth through a cleft of the mountains—a Titan portal, with a crag on either hand, shapen like a huge grey tower. Warily you descend the sheer rock that flanks the entrance to the Cumberland Cave, and heedfully watch your time, lest the vicious rush of the incoming waves drench you ere you can set foot underneath the dark vault, where, like ghostly drapery, the grey stalactites hang heavily down out of the twilight, whose dusky depths seem gloomiest at noontide; but when the evening sun slants a rosy pathway across the waters, then the gleam of the rock-pools

—“strikes up through the portal a ghostly reverse on the dome of the cave.
On the depth of the dome ever darkling and dim to the crown of its arc,
That the sun-coloured tapestry, sunless for ever, may soften the dark.”

However far you follow the windings of this coast, you will be loth to turn back. Round every headland you expect to find a lovely bay, with silver-flashing creek murmuring seaward, and you are not disappointed. The glorious music of the waters attends you all the way; the air is misty with cool spray, which floats in vapour-wreaths round the huge bluffs that bathe their feet in the brine; the dark grey cliffs tower up like a fortress-wall on your right. And now, on the left, between you and the sea, there runs a long, shoulder-high battlement of Nature's rearing, even-squared and regular as a sea-wall of man's fashioning. Between this and the high cliff you tread a broad, level causeway; but everywhere in the grey stone at your feet, and in the face of the sea-wall, and all up the sheer cliff, are embedded myriads of spherical brown stones like rusty cannon-balls, as though these battery-rocks had long ago been bombarded from the sea. Ten miles along the coast the rocks assume yet more fantastic shapes. Not only are the cannon-balls there, but what seem huge guns mounted on petrified carriages point defiantly seaward, and near them is a great crag in the likeness of a human head. From the south it presents a perfect profile of Greek beauty, but from the north it is a witch's face, with sinister sneer and dark eyes stonily glaring from cavernous sockets; while behind it gnarled roots, fantastically twined, fitly represent snake-wreathed tresses. Some adventurous souls press on and on along this enchanted shore, till they reach, thirty miles away from Lorne, the smooth sands and long low foreland of Apollo Bay; but spirits cast in less heroic mould may follow the coast north-eastward from Lorne to the Eagle Rock, with its fossil-studded sides and its octopus-haunted pools.

But the charm of Lorne is not on the seaward side only. Inland there are forest-tracks, narrow and overshadowed, where axe and bill have cleft a way into the very heart of the wood-world, revealing a land of streams, of deep dark fern-gullies, of gleaming waterslides and echoing falls. Here is a blithe party starting for the Erskine Falls. They are provisioned as against a siege. Tinkling pannikins galore and smoke-grimed "billies" are here. Everyone grasps the six-foot alpenstock, without which no equipment is here accounted complete. They stream up the long track, "counter-changed with dusk and bright," between the tall white tree-stems, each straight as an arrow for a hundred feet, sometimes for two or three. The feathery foliage high overhead seems to lie in delicate tracery of lacework against the eternal blue, while the vivid green of the dense undergrowth makes all below look like an English copse in spring. Parrots, crimson, blue, and green, flash like living gems between the trees; the goblin chuckle and long derisive mirth of the laughing jackass make the air jubilant with sound: if you are both keen-eyed and fortunate, you may find in a fork of the branches a native bear; no ursine terror, this, but an innocent, harmless, sleepy little sloth, a small fat incarnation of sluggish contentment, with beady eyes winking through soft grey fur; or perchance we shall discover, sunning himself by the track, a dragon-seeming iguana, which replies to our insulting pokes by defiantly thrusting out a livid-blue tongue; or—an excitement oftener talked of than tasted—a snake is surprised in his siesta, and is promptly immolated on the altar of our vengeance for the mischief he had it in him to commit. The murmur of the sea faints on the ear and dies, the

last far gleam of dimpled purple is shut out by a huge mountain-shoulder, and all around is the forest primeval, with folded ridges dim behind their veil of ganzy violet, and cool dusky shadows between, luring your feet to turn aside into mysterious enchanted dells.

But beware lest the glamour of the forest beguile you: leave the track but five short minutes, and you may chance to be "bushed" for hours. Once fairly in the bewildering tangle of undergrowth, the jungle of messmate, dogwood, and peppermint, with trailing meshes of creepers and wiregrass interlaced about your knees and dropping over your shoulders like a sudden net-cast of malicious pixies, while, like a wall across your path, stretches the fallen forest-king, a flame-blasted barrier four or five feet high, on which you scarcely dare to climb, lest your foot crash through its rottenness into the black central hollow, perchance to light amidst a knotted coil of serpents, or nameless "squat ugly things of deadly shade," abominations of pustuled skin, and eyes of dull-gleaming opal—then, when whichever way you turn it seems to be the wrong one, leading into denser gloom and blinder snares, you may understand something of that sickening sinking of heart which is implied in the words "lost in the bush."

Among the grey-white stems there rises here and there a black shaft, yet with crest strangely green and feet muffled round with frondage of vivid emerald or tinged with azure bloom. It may be we shall cross a wide belt of forest thus thronged with memorials of fiery devastation and of Nature's deathless youth; for every few years there springs up in the pathless solitudes a sudden flame—no man knows, or none confesses, how—and with the waxing of the fire rises the wind; swiftly the grass glares out in broad sheets of fervent glow; the brakes crumble down in ruddy rain; red serpents dart up the tall stems and leap from tree to tree; and an awful deluge, with rolling billows of fire and fierce spray whirling far before on the wings of the hurricane, roars over league after league of the forest, over-canopied with smoke-clouds surging and tossing in lurid brightness. It is not a year since I saw the darkness of it swallow up the day, as the black masses, more solid-seeming than the earth itself, were heaved upward thousands of feet, and streamed out far over the sea, which gleamed beneath with an unearthly light, as though there were fire in the heart of the flood. One would imagine that after such an overflowing scourge had passed through it, the forest would for years be naught but a blackened desolation of blasted stumps—a dead world haunted by ashen-hued skeletons. Yet a few short months well-nigh efface the traces of the fire. Fresh grass and ferns spring up as by magic after the first shower; the "fire-weed" weaves a dense mantle of green; the great trees seem to have renewed their life; the white gums show smooth stems, stainless as if no flame had ever touched them; only here and there roughly-wrinkled shafts of the stringy-bark rise, branded for ever with the memory of that day of horror.

At last we gain the top of the ridge, five miles from Lorne. Here, two selectors' huts, each with its patch of tith-land in a hard-won clearing, tempt us with strawberries and dark-crimson raspberries, and milk, to turn aside for a few restful moments. Thereafter the track tends downhill, growing steeper and ever steeper, till we are fain to clutch the slender stems and swing ourselves down from tree to tree, each moment sinking deeper into twilight of luminous green. The murmur and low laughter of waters fall

upon the ear, and with one last neck-perilling plunge we stand in the hollow of the river-bed, with the deep-brown stems of the tree-ferns making "a pillared shade," their



MOUTH OF THE ST. GEORGE RIVER.

broad fronds meeting and interlacing overhead: while in front, between the dusky columns, the flashing ripples of the river shine in fitful gleams. Sweet is the cool water as it plashes and swirls about the mossy stepping-stones, over which we pass through sunlight from gloom into gloom. Our

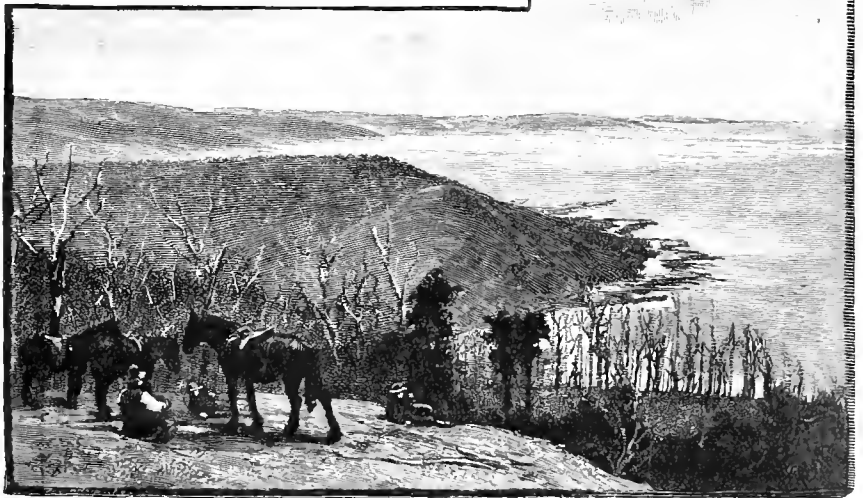
way henceforth leads by a narrow path beside the bed of the stream, crossing it from time to time. Tree-ferns are all around us, outnumbering here the forest-anakim, and sometimes almost rivalling their girth. Here we stoop beneath a shaggy brown monster, two feet in diameter, leaning across the track, and looking like a Bactrian camel's neck, with matted beard drooping beneath its bend: there, as we stand amidst a dense grove of their graceful shafts and look upward, we make guess that their fronds, faintly sighing in the breeze, branch out twenty or thirty feet overhead. We pass a broad crag slightly sloping from the perpendicular, down which the water slides and leaps in glittering threads to a black tarn beneath—"Straw's Falls," men call them; but they do but whet our appetite for the beauty that awaits us now so near.

A few minutes more of faring through the dewy shadows, and the hoarse calling of the waterfall strikes upon the ear. Away in front, amid the columned stems and green interlacings of slender sprays and chequerwork of quivering leaves, a white veil seems to hang. We thrust aside the last screen of fern-frond and odorous boughs of peppermint and musk, and lo, the Erskine Fall. Not one solid volume of water hurled over the rock-verge in one wild leap, to be swallowed up in turmoil of foam and seething whirl, is this; but lovingly it clings to the face of the cliff, down which it melts and slips and reels; feathering from fairy ledges and gleaming through little clefts, drifting to rightward and swaying to leftward as though it were swung by the breezes, with dainty hurry and with wilful lingering, with tinkle of laughter and

radiance of smile, as though the pulsing of a happy life were in it, as though half-viewless Oread and Naiad with linked fingers and plashing feet came dancing evermore down a ladder of diamonds and emeralds, to plunge at last in one long glorious leap of snowy limbs and streaming tresses into their mountain bath, above which hovers the ghost of a rainbow, half-revealed through the dimness of the mist that floats up from the bursting of the foam-bells. The air is full of the sound thereof, no "drumming thunder" and hoarse reverberation, but a mingled harmony of calling voices and witchery of laughter, of blithe whisper and sorrowless sighing, blending with a multitudinous murmur and muffled roar as of breakers rushing over sands. Behind the veil of falling water there are discerned only here and there wet gleams of the dark rock, for the face of the crag is all marked with glittering green, with maiden-hair tossing gems from its delicate quivering sprays, shimmering half-hidden through screens of falling crystal, or peeping between the tremulous threads of silver, with plumes of grass and careless-trailing creepers, with cushioned mosses and sweet tangle of tiny leaves and starlike flowers, all agleam with sunlit dew. And high up above, green boughs are bending over, and broad-shadowing fronds, and behind them the straight white stems soar upward till their leafy crowns are wreathed with strays from cloudland. On either hand of the deep ravine rise up sheer the mountain-sides, a wilderness of verdure, of blossomed gold and snowy blooms, giant trunks entwined with clinging parasites and hung with rarest ferns and bowing branches, odorous with musk. Down the stream's bed, till all is blended and lost in dimness of shade, are ranged the long ranks of the tree-ferns, with their broad crests softly heaving in swells of green. Below the falls the stream rushes

through a huddled confusion of shattered trunks and splintered limbs, till it breaks away, sliding over rock-shelves and rushing through chasms, and anon spreading into broad smooth reaches, where "the chequered sunbeams dance

against the sandy shallows." And overhead broods the fathomless heaven, a long lane of deep pure blue.



LOUTITT BAY, FROM MOUNT ST. GEORGE.

Time would fail to tell of all the scenes of haunting loveliness that make Lorne a joy for ever: of "Paradise," a twilight bower of fernery; of Corra Linn, where the stream descends, leap after leap, a wondrous half-mile of broad rock-ledges, a giant's staircase, till between high dark walls of crag it glides mysteriously beneath a floor of close-laid tree-trunks, bearded with moss and heavy-trailing creeper and dank weed; or the Phantom Falls, which won their name from the baffled searchers who tried so long in vain to re-discover them after their first finding; of Stony Creek and the Horse-shoe Falls, where the shadows are weirdly dark at noonday, and gigantic tree-ferns may be found, eleven feet in girth; of Loutitt Bay, illustrated on p. 288; of the Veiled Harpy Rock, pictured below; of Kelsall's Rock, a huge bluff whence may be descried the ships that enter the Heads forty miles away, where you look down upon tree-tops waving hundreds of feet below, while the heights that throng around send back shout or bugle-call many times repeated.

All these, nor these alone, we must needs leave undescribed. But he for whom Nature has a living voice and an enthralling charm will not weary of the lone forest depths, of the wind-haunted mountain ridges, of the murmuring sands, of the rocks that echo to the thunder of the trampling surges. And though broad seas may roll between, and years of severance may make many things forgotten, that pleasant spot will surely live in his heart, a brooding star looking across twilight fields of memory.



THE VEILED HARPY ROCK, LORNE.

AN ENGLISHWOMAN'S FIRST EXPERIENCE OF THE BUSH.

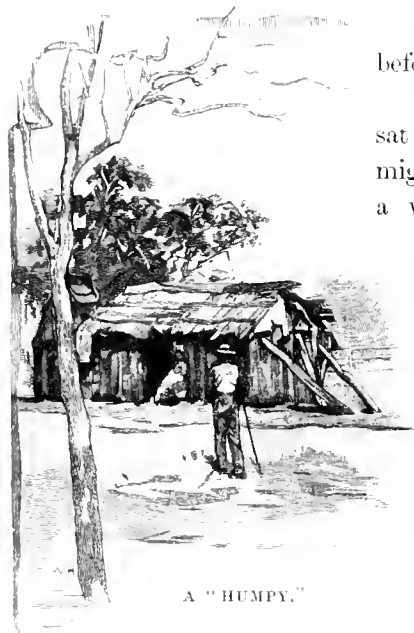
A New Chum—Kangaroos and Rabbits—A Distinguished Colonial—"Roughing It"—A "Humpy"—Hot Cakes—The Laughing Jackass—A Bush Wash—Rain—A Carrier's Camp—A Steep Place—A Great Solitude—At Home—The Offices—Gentle Correction—Dicky's Grave.

I AM an old hand now: I was a "new chum" once, travelling up into the unsettled part of the Bush by the Central Queensland Railway. How long ago that seems, when I strained my eyes with wild excitement to see the kangaroos hop unconcernedly out of the way of the train. "They are as tame as rabbits!" I exclaimed.

The words were magical. Everyone in the railway carriages began to talk. An invasion of rabbits—rabbit-proof fence—the ministry who could not legislate vigorously in such an emergency ought to be turned out—the rabbits would be over the border, and then an Act of Parliament would be passed to keep them out. They are over now, and I know well enough what a serious matter it is: how they and the marsupials will fight us for every blade of rich blue grass which we want to reserve for our cattle, our sheep, and our horses; but then I knew nothing of all this, and I felt as if I was dreaming, with little Alice in Wonderland, about a parliament elected by rabbits, and prime ministers with long ears and pink eyes.

I had been told the astounding fact that during the last six months thirty thousand kangaroos had been killed on the run through which the train was now passing, and I was sitting quietly in a corner of the carriage chewing the end of reflection, and listening to everything that was being said, anxious to learn all I could about this new country. It was a new world, and all the landmarks were different. It would hardly have seemed so strange if the speakers had spoken another language; but this was English, and yet at every turn the conversation drifted out of my comprehension. It was all cattle, or sheep, or horses; So-and-So was mustering, So-and-So had been caught "faking," whims, divining rods, and so forth. We were going over a range of hills, and the train was crawling along. The engine, being barely powerful enough on the flat, and quite impotent to take the train up-hill, tried to get up one incline three times, and at last succeeded at the pace at which a high-class funeral travels. The railways of Queensland are narrow-gauge, the carriages long, with a gangway down the centre, and the seats placed like those of a knifeboard omnibus. There are only two classes, first and second. We had the last carriage in the train, and besides obtaining a good view of the country, possessed the advantage of seeing the sleepers dance away into distance from under our feet. Everything about the fittings of the whole train rattled, and shivered, and shook, so that conversation was entirely out of the question, except in pauses like those when the engine was taking breath. The word "rabbit" having set everyone talking, the conversation continued brisk.

"They take the passengers and mails up to Pine Hill now, don't they?" asked someone.



A "HUMPY."

"I don't know; but it is only a matter of months before the line is open to Alpha."

I was the only lady in the carriage; opposite to me sat an individual whom, had I been in the old country, I might have taken for a suburban tax-collector. He was a wealthy butcher, and having stumbled on some gold, is now a millionaire, and was one of the distinguished colonials fêted in England at the Exhibition.

"What do you say the name of the new station is?" he asked.

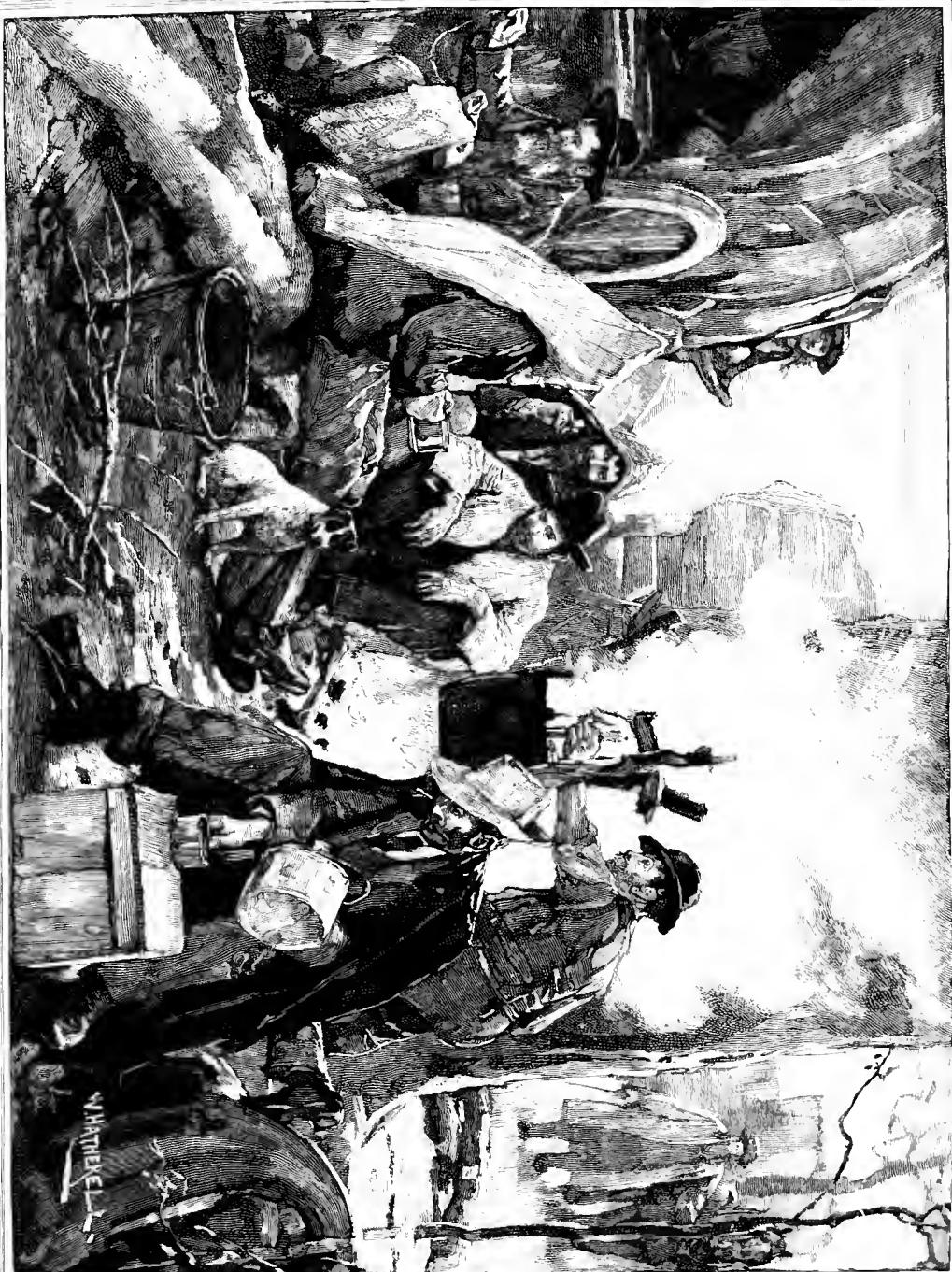
"Alpha."

"Alpha," he repeated, "and the next place is Beta, and there is a place over there called Omega. Aint it strange, now, that the people about here can't find any decent names for their places, but must needs call them by these black-fellow's names!"

The train, after much lingering, had pulled up short, and I was glad that the collection of my numerous packages enabled me to have my laugh out under cover. It is all fair game for a "new chum" to laugh if a bushman makes a mistake, for there is no denying that they are unmerciful in their taunts at a new chum. The Australian bushman is strong, capable, and ingenious, inured to hardship, and incapable of fretting over trifles; but he is often ill-tempered and morose, always sure that the colonial way is best, and that there is nothing to be learnt from anyone, least of all from a new chum. You must swing yourself on to your horse after the approved bush style; you must not care at all for the outward beauty of anything; rough and ready is his motto, and neatness—be blowed. The new chum, on the other hand, pitchforked from a drawing-room into a wild forest, and from silver and fine porcelain to a pocket-knife and a tin mug, is apt to have airs and graces ridiculous in this new atmosphere. His hands are feeble and clumsy. Until now his wants have all been provided for him, and he is helpless as a child before the necessities of a life where you are called upon to slay and cook before you can sit down and eat. In spite of his helplessness, which places him every moment at a disadvantage, the new chum's brain is active, and over fond of criticising and suggesting, when in many cases he does not even half understand what he is talking about.

"The train will not take us any farther to-night. The man is here with the buggy, and to-morrow morning at dawn we will start for the station. I am afraid that you will find it rather a rough shake-down, but there is an obliging woman here who will do her best for you. Come in, and you shall have some supper."

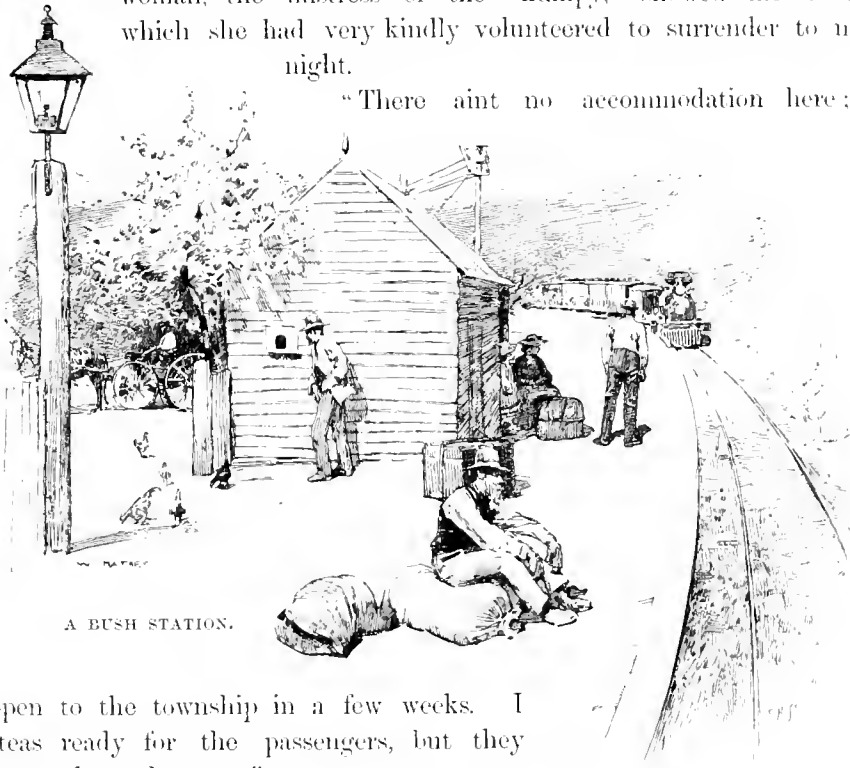
I profess myself eager to "rough it," and declare that I should enjoy sleeping on the floor. We enter the little shanty. It is built of rough wood, and roofed with the bark of the box-tree. This bark is stripped off in great sheets, and when dry is about



A CARRIERS' CAMP.

half-an-inch thick. It is as smooth as paper, and very useful for roofing. The front room of the shanty has a bar, and some seven or eight navvies were standing at it. A long table, with one bench and a few empty cases, which stood ready in the event of extra seats being required, was, besides the bar, the whole furniture of the room. The table was spread with a clean white cloth, and set out with knives and forks and teacups, and the largest of tin teapots. Tea is the great Queensland beverage, and it is drunk at breakfast, lunch, and dinner. I felt quite hungry, and readily agreed to go and take off my hat, and then come and sit down to supper. An untidy-looking woman, the mistress of the "humpy," showed me to her room, which she had very kindly volunteered to surrender to me for the night.

"There aint no accommodation here; the line



A BUSH STATION.

will be open to the township in a few weeks. I jist has teas ready for the passengers, but they 'eve to camp where they can."

Saying which, she drew aside a bit of sacking behind the bar, and showed me the apartment which she had so kindly placed at my disposal. I gasped for breath. By the faint light which pierced from the bar through the ill-fitting slabs I saw a place which was more fitted for a dog-kennel than a human sleeping-room.

"It aint what you may call tidy," the woman continued. "My man 'eve jist been changing hisself." She caught up a pair of trousers and a shirt lying on the floor, and stuffed them into the unmade bed, and, with a deftly directed kick, sent one of her own garments under the bed, which action of hers produced a low whine from a dog, followed by a whimper of a newly-born puppy.

"Lord bless us, if Snip aint had her puppies in here! I wonder how many she 'eve."

A call from the bar distracted her attention from Snip. I stood aside to let her pass out, and then I passed in.

"Nothing—no, nothing on earth—will make me sleep in here," I exclaimed to myself. "I will just wash my hands, and leave my hat on the bed, so as not to offend the woman, but I would rather die than sleep on her bed." I looked round for a basin and some water, but there was nothing of the kind in the room. I took off my hat, but could not muster courage to put it down on the bed, which looked as if it were never shaken or made. I was like a person in the presence of a dreadful tragedy, revolted by the sight, and yet rooted to the spot with a sort of fascination. I just lifted the blanket. The bed was full of cakes—small, round, delicious-looking little buns! I seized my hat, and ran, ran for my life, past the bar, through the navvies, out into the open air.

Supper is ready. Oh! who can eat? I cannot, and yet a few moments ago I was so hungry. I tell no one what I have seen, for I am conscious that I bragged a little about my delight at "roughing it," and now I find that I am only beginning to learn the meaning of the word. I try to eat some beef—that cannot have been kept in the bed! In spite of my fatigue, I am amused at the novelty of everything. The faces of friends at home rise and smirk at me as I put the food into my mouth with a two-pronged iron fork. I am very dainty. I don't fancy sweet potatoes at all, and never did care much for cabbage. Pumpkins, yes, I have seen them hanging up in the cottages at home; I have never tasted one, but I am sure that I should not like it. I am laughed at. "You will like everything by-and-by, and look upon cabbage and pumpkins as luxuries. Ah! here is something you will like."

I look up, and see a large dish of cakes!

"Hot cakes for you," says the woman, with some pride but scant ceremony, as she plumps the cakes on the table just in front of me.

I am convulsed with laughter, for full well I know how they were kept hot.

"Oh, don't eat them, don't eat them," I whispered to my companion.

"Why not?" he asks.

"I cannot tell you, it is too dreadful."

He laughs. "I will eat them now, and you shall tell me about them to-morrow." He eats and enjoys them. I wish I hadn't looked inside that bed; if only I hadn't, how I should have enjoyed them too, for I am still hungry. I have been too dainty to make a good meal off the things offered to me.

"I do not care where I sleep, but I cannot and will not sleep in there."

I can be very determined, my enemies say obstinate, when I choose, and I put down my foot so decidedly in this instance that I am soon lying, rolled in a blanket, on a bed of boughs, out in the open air, gazing up at the southern cross, and wonderingly trying to look forward into my new existence.

I should have enjoyed my first night in the Bush very much if there had not been so many dogs; but when one dog ceased barking, another began, and all through the night they came sniffing round me, licking my face, and trying to share my blanket. I awake suddenly with an idea that I have heard a horrible noise. There is only

a faint streak of dawn in the horizon, and the trees still stand out black as ink against the brightening sky. We are perched on the very top of a range of hills in the middle of a scrub so dense that the trees have space neither to grow nor to die. The life is choked out of them, but they have no room to fall to the ground, and stand erect with their gaunt, leafless limbs against the skies. Even those that live only show life at the extreme top branches, and the trunks of all are grey, and gnarled, and twisted into fantastic shapes, and the ground under them is grey with masses of petrified wood, and there is neither moss, nor lichen, nor flower, nor weed, and all round is the deepest silence.

Hark! there is the noise that woke me, nearer than before, and stranger than anything I have ever heard. Is it a loud, vulgar laughter? Are hobgoblins a reality, and are they daring to make merry in this stern, grey, lifeless wood?

"The horses are ready, and if you will come and have a cup of tea we will start directly. That noise. Oh, it is the laughing jackass! There are five of them in that tree. Do you see them? Odd-looking grey birds, with beaks like a woodpecker's, though I believe they belong to the kingfisher tribe. We call them the 'squatter's clock,' for a fair day's work begins when they call you, and ends when they tell you." I emerge from my blankets, and my companion seizes upon them and rolls them up into what he calls a swag.

"I should very much like a basin and some water to wash in, I am so dirty from yesterday's long day in the train."

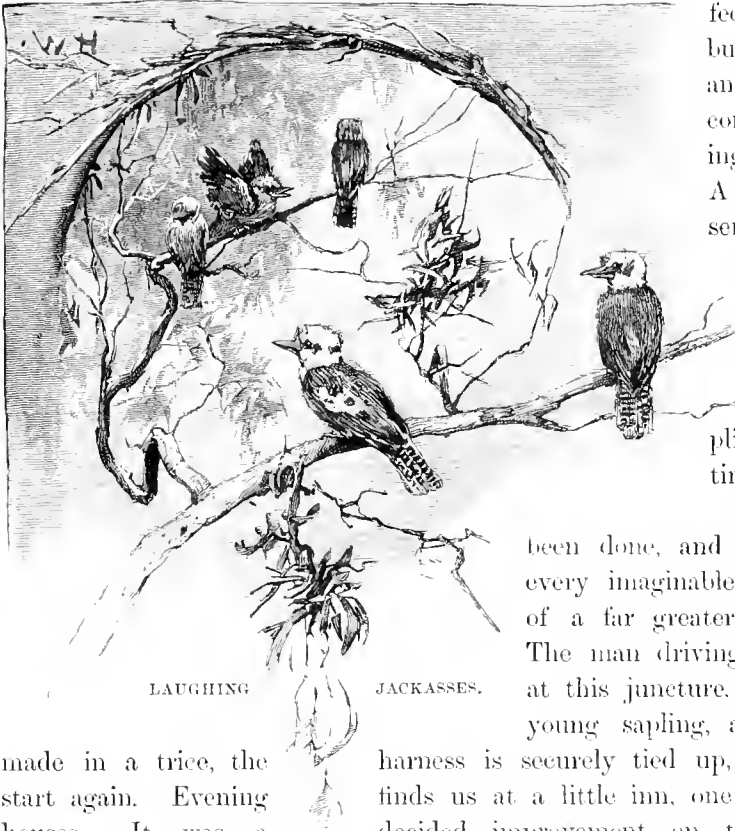
My request is met by a very grave face, and the answer, "We are at the top of the range, and water is very scarce here, but I will see what I can do."

It was difficult not to look dismayed when my companion returned with a little tin mugful of water.

"I wanted the water to wash with, not to drink," I said mildly.

"I know that, and here is the soap. Now you must take your first Bush lesson, and learn how bushmen wash when they have no basin, and water is scarce. Hold out your hands, so. Now I shall put one thimbleful of water into them, and then you must soap them. Now a rinse. Now a nice lot for your face. Once more, and the pannikin is empty. There, you have not had a very bad wash, have you? and you are a fully-baptised bushwoman."

We are seated in the buggy—a four-wheeled pony carriage with a seat on which three can sit at a pinch, and a tray behind on to which our luggage is tightly lashed. The air is quite cool, and the horses fresh and eager. It is down-hill from the start: the break is out of order, and we begin to go disagreeably fast. I hear my companion mutter, "Bother the break!" and I can see from his set face that he is anxious. We go faster and faster: in front I see no road, and it looks as if we were about to leap over a precipice. I hold my breath. There is a dip, a slight rise of some few feet, and then a sheer descent. We pass over everything, clearing the great big ruts with flying leaps, and then we tumble down the steep descent helter-skelter! The agony is made as short as possible by the speed at which we travel. At the bottom is some loose sandy gravel, and a big hole. I know nothing more until I find myself on my



LAUGHING

JACKASSES.

made in a trice, the start again. Evening houses. It was a harness is securely tied up, the break seen to, and we find us at a little inn, one of the stage coach resting-decided improvement on the night before, for there were no cakes in the bed; it was only used as a family wardrobe, the mattress being formed of a sprinkling of moleskin trousers and socks, and any amount of feminine attire. A blanket covered everything, and all appeared neat and tidy.

A heavy thunderstorm made sleeping out in the open impossible, and as I was very tired I was soon content to lay me down on the family attire above mentioned. Nay, more, I will make a candid confession to the reader, and tell him that with my own hands I arranged a pair of the moleskin trousers for my pillow! The last words I heard as I dropped off to sleep were, "I hope to goodness the creeks won't be up to-morrow."

The next morning I was woke by a cold sensation in my neck. Drop, drop, drop. I sat up and found that I was drenched to the skin. I had been sleeping under a leakage of the bark roof. Upon glancing upwards, I saw that this leakage was of old date, for a faded and much battered parasol had been raised on high as protection. It was good for a shower, but not for the downpour we were having.

Rain, rain, rain. All day it rained, and as nothing can exceed the melancholy look of the Bush in rainy weather, a fit of dreariness settles on everyone. I must go out. I never stayed at home for rain in England, and I would not listen to any remonstrances now, so I made my first acquaintance with "black soil" country.

About five steps from the door I bogged above my ankles, and the heavy, slimy

feet beside the buggy. The buggy is lying on its side, and the horses are turned completely round, and are looking at it through their collars. A faint scent of white rose sends my first thoughts flying towards the glass bottles of my dressing-bag.

"By Jove, you stood that well! You are made for the Bush," are compliments which make my blood tingle with pleasure.

Not much damage has been done, and a box in the buggy holds every imaginable requisite for the mending of a far greater catastrophe than this one. The man driving the spare horses comes up at this juncture. A tomahawk cuts down a young sapling, and a new splinter bar is

black soil stuck to me and weighted me down so that I could hardly stir. It was unbearably hot in my ulster, and I already felt dragged and tired, and would fain have gone back, but I knew my re-appearance so soon after my confident start would raise a laugh against me, so I plodded on.

A turn in the track brought me quite unexpectedly to a carrier's camp, where some eight large waggons and two or three covered drays were drawn up. In the trunk of an old tree a fire was burning quite cheertfully, and half-a-dozen men with sacks tied round their necks were standing or squatting around it. A covered dray drawn up alongside the fire showed a woman with a baby at her breast, and several children of various sizes, having tea.

"Have a cup of cocoa, missus?" asked the woman, as I passed.

I stopped to thank her for the invitation, and whilst speaking to her my attention was riveted by two Galar parrots. Their bodies the softest pearl, their breasts grey their crests the most delicate pink. They were hopping from knee to knee, sharing the children's bread-and-jam.

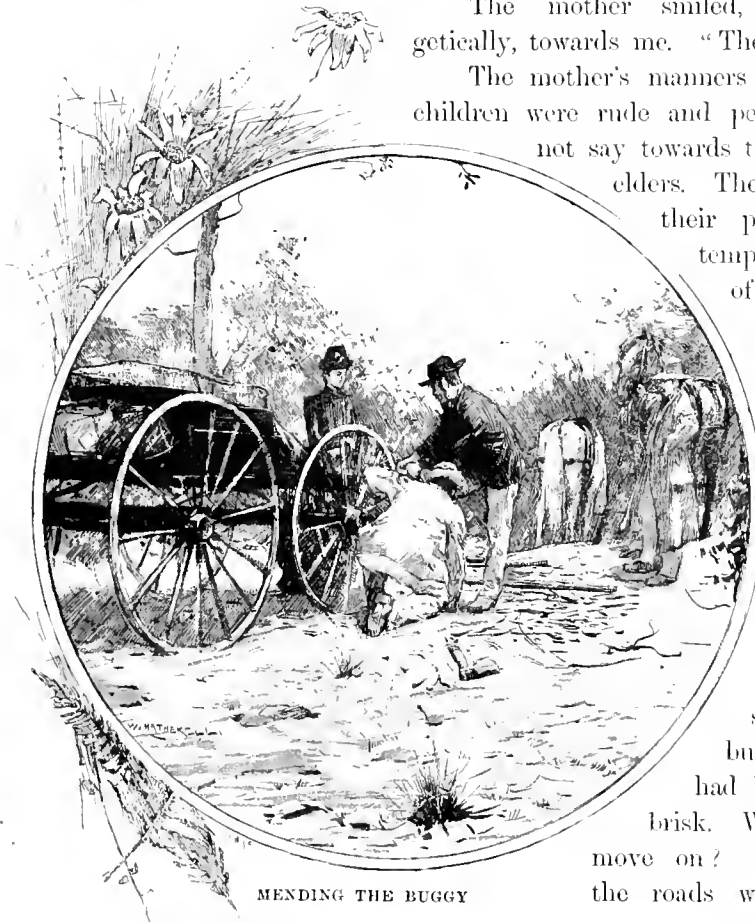
"What beautiful parrots!"

"Yes—aint they?" said the eldest little girl; "and this one can swear beautiful."

The mother smiled, half-indulgently, half-apologetically, towards me. "The children teaches it, you see."

The mother's manners had a rough grace, but the children were rude and pert, without reverence, I will not say towards their betters, but towards their elders. There was no danger that in their proximity I should ever be tempted to forget that I was out of England.

The mother was an Englishwoman, and had been fifteen years in the colony. Her husband owned this waggon and a bullock-team, but times were very bad, and carriage so low that it hardly paid them to carry. They were now taking a load of wool down a distance of some 150 miles at £7 a ton, but from £15 to £20 was what had been paid when carriage was brisk. When would they be able to move on? Oh! not for another week; the roads would be in a terrible state



MENDING THE BUGGY

now. But the rain was badly wanted; there was no feed anywhere: every blade of grass was eaten down along the road, and by law they were compelled to keep their stock within half-a-mile of the road on either side. Bullocks were "better nor horses and worse nor horses;" they would pull you out of a bog when horses would grow disheartened and refuse to exert themselves, but they died quicker than horses, and one horse team would outlast two bullock teams. Then they cost less: a good unbroken steer to go into a team could be had for £5, but a fine draught colt was worth £25 any day.

All the time that I conversed with the mother, seated up alongside her on a box in the dray, the children continued in a nasal twang to urge the parrot to swear; but it resisted all entreaties, until just as I was leaving the dray a burst of delight from the children, and a chorus of "He said it! he said it!" informed me that the wicked witicism had been uttered.

I passed the group of men by the fire, and said "Good evening" to them. They answered me civilly, but none of them touched their hats: it is not the custom in Queensland. In the old convict days, the convicts had to touch their hats to their keepers, and this greeting has in consequence been degraded into a sign of slavery.

The waggons were all named—the names painted up above those of the owner's: the "Star of the North," the "Happy-go-Lucky," the "Poor, but not Mean," the "Jolly Sweetheart."

I waded back to the inn, and took off my boots, several inches thick all over with black soil. The rain continued all night, and though it cleared away towards early morning, the next day had to be spent in the companionship of the cockatoo, whose oft-reiterated phrases had begun to pall terribly. My only boots were so wet I could not get them on, and as I could not face the boggy ground in my slippers, I was perforce chained to the humpy.

The dogs, the pigs, the cats, and the goats, all walked in and out of the house as they pleased: the cocks and hens had to be chased off the tables, where they stood and calmly pecked at the loaf of bread which we were going to eat.

"Where do you think that I have just found an egg?" I said to the mistress of the establishment.

She looked at me rather blankly. "I don't know," she answered.

"In my bed," I said, triumphantly.

"Oh, yes! two hens lays there regular. One is off laying jist now."

Another night, and then, oh! joy, we are to start. The day has broken fair, and bright, and cloudless, as only a Queensland day can break. We have had breakfast, and the horses are in. I have left my boots by the kitchen fire drying to the last moment. I run in to fetch them. There is no one in the kitchen but the cockatoo. "Mother, the coach is coming." "Poor Cocky." "Give Cocky piece of bread." Yesterday I felt like wringing that bird's head off; to-day, on the eve of leaving, I feel quite amiably disposed towards him. I pick up my boots. "Oh! you villain." "Oh! you nasty bird." Every button, twelve on each boot, had been ruthlessly picked off. I hear a shout of "Quite ready to start: make haste, please!" I fret and fume:

and beg you not to ask me in what direction my boots were sent flying. I run out to the buggy in my slippers, and lose first one, then the other, in the still boggy ground. However, we are off. Even now we are on the run, and shall be at the head station some time in the afternoon.

The run is the size of one of the smaller English counties, sixty miles long and about thirty across; twenty thousand head of cattle, and several hundred horses, graze on it.

The road is terribly heavy, and the teams have cut it up, so that we can hardly, even by the most careful quartering of the ruts, manage to keep to the track.

Now, hold fast! Here we come to the creek. A steep, precipitous, slippery bank. Down we go. The water splashes all into the buggy, and I think with agony of my dressing-bag.

"Horses! I'll warn you! Get up!" Smack, smack, smack goes the whip; we are going up the opposite bank at full gallop, and the buggy is hanging so perpendicularly that I feel almost like a fly crawling about a ceiling. At this juncture I have forgotten all about my dressing-bag.

A few miles of level sandy road lie before us, and it is a great relief to me to hear that there are no more creeks to cross just yet. We tool along at a good pace, dodging break-neck stumps, and ant-hills more dangerous still. The ant-hills excite my wonder; they are great mounds of earth built up by the ants, and we pass through large towns of them. They are hard and solid as a rock, and when wetted they make a capital cement, and are used in the Bush for fireplaces and for floors.

The hot sun beating down after the rain has made the grass and herbage spring up as if by magic, and there is a beautiful tinge of green everywhere: but I am a too recent arrival from the green meadows of England really to appreciate it.

I have been asked what most struck me in the Bush. I answer unhesitatingly, its great solitude. Every turn in the road I expected to see a village with its church and schools; but during a drive of forty-eight miles we met one solitary swagsman, that is, a man on foot, carrying all his worldly goods on his back, and his water-bag in his hand. And here I must turn aside for a moment, and speak of the merits of the water-bag. The old settlers remember the time when water was carried in tin kegs, strapped either to a man's side or to his saddle. By the sun beating down on these tins, the water became so warm that it frequently made a man sick to drink it. History has not recorded the name of the inventor of the water-bag, but he has deserved the thanks of all dwellers in hot, dry climates. A water-bag is made of coarse canvas, it is seamed tightly up all round, and in one corner the nozzle of a glass bottle is sewn in to serve as spout. The evaporation from the damp canvas keeps the water always cool and nice.

The roads have proved so heavy that we have travelled along very slowly, and it is well on in the afternoon before I give a joyful cry of surprise, as I see a gate in front of us. My spirits drop a little when I hear that it is only the first gate of three paddocks, and that we have six miles to go before we reach the station. The paddocks are about 4,000 acres large. "Not bad-sized fields," I exclaim; and then I hear

that the bullock paddock on the other side of the head station is forty square miles. The paddocks through which we are passing contain horses, of which there are some 400 on the run. We catch a sight of the king of one of the "mobs" as we drive through. He looks a very magnificent animal as he tosses his long forelock out of his eyes, and makes a bound forward, then stands proud and erect, with arched neck, to see the buggy go past. In the last paddock are the saddle-horses. The beautiful thoroughbred Starlight comes galloping up to us, surrounded by his mob of mares.

At last I sight the white roof of my new home, and lean forward and strain my neck eagerly to take in its every detail. It stands on a gentle eminence, in the middle of a wide plain, the only human habitation within a radius of many miles.

The nearest lady neighbour I shall have lives seventy-five miles off. Our next-door neighbours are bachelors, and live in a little back humpy thirty-five miles away.

And now I am getting out of the buggy, and at last I stand on the wide verandah of the house. We will sit quiet for a bit, for it is very hot still; the thermometer on the verandah marks 96°, and a register card hanging above shows that it has been up to 108° and 112° on some days. But, although undeniably hot, the climate of the interior of Queensland is decidedly healthy, and there are no days when a white man cannot work. There is a delicious breeze blowing now, and it would be delightful on the verandah if only the flies did not render life a torment. They swarm and attack you in every direction, especially about the eyes. Their sting is very venomous, and you often see people



ANT-HILLS.

with their eyes swollen up so that they cannot see out of them at all. We move into the house. It is all carefully darkened, and we are comparatively free from flies until a tray with some tea is brought in, and a whole army of flies follows in its wake. The house is charming, all built of wood—walls, ceiling, and floor. The rooms are large, with lofty domed ceilings. The wood is Cyprus pine, bright yellow, beautifully veined with brown. When it is first sawn, it has an extremely sweet scent, and is one of the few woods the white ants will not attack. The mantelpiece is of bloodwood, a deep red colour, and very handsome. The furniture is Austrian cane, and all looks cool and fresh.

How good the tea was, and what cream and butter! I began to feel at home at once.

The sun begins to go down, and we put on our hats, and go out to see the different buildings. First to the kitchen, which stands apart from the main building, and connected with it by a verandah and a wide trellis of vines, which are literally

laden with bunches of grapes. On Christmas Day the peaches will be almost over, and the grapes in full swing. The fireplace of the kitchen is enormous, and huge logs of wood are blazing away fiercely in it. It has no range, only a shelf of stones cemented, and two iron bars, on which the saucepans rest. A camp oven, which is a



A SWAGSMAN.

little, round, movable pan, with a lid to it, stands in the fireplace on hot coals, and hot coals are heaped up on its lid.

The cook is a Chinaman. He has a cigarette in his mouth. I hear that he is always smoking, except when he is playing the flute. And when he plays the flute everyone on the station devoutly hopes that he will begin to smoke again. I am delighted with his spick-and-span appearance, and the cleanliness of the kitchen. When dinner comes, I cannot praise his cooking enough. His pastry was so delicious that

I declared the man would make his fortune in London. I remained enchanted with Tommy (*alias* "Ah Sing") for several weeks, when chance makes me discover that he stones the raisins for our Sunday pudding with his teeth, and attains the acme of flaky pastry by keeping both his hands free to attend to the dough and moistening from his mouth.

The little fly-proof dairy is half underground. The key of office is handed to me as I cross the threshold, and I am as delighted with the idea of churning butter and skimming the pans of milk as Marie Antoinette was when she built the little dairy in the Trianon.

From the dairy we pass over to the bachelors' quarters, where the overseer and the "Jackaroos," or gentlemen who are gaining colonial experience, live. It is a dear little cottage, turning its back on the big plain, and facing the creek, which, after the late rains, is swollen: and from the verandah of the cottage we can watch it curve and bend through the valley by the great white gum-trees, round which the cockatoos fly in hundreds, cawing their noisy evensong, just as the rooks do at home. Hard by the creek stands the windmill that pumps the water up to the house. Beside it lies an old disused horse-power. It was part of the gear belonging to the wash-pool in the old days when this was a sheep station.

"See, this is what ruined the first owners. It is only a grass-seed, sharp-pointed like a thorn, and barbed like an arrow, yet it killed thousands of sheep, and ate away a rich man's substance. The country is splendid for cattle, but no good for sheep; the grass-seed catches in their wool and eats into their flesh, and they pine away to nothing. Walk just two yards in a woollen petticoat, and you will see the state you get into. I have had to throw away a pair of tweed trousers in which I stalked some duck. You must dress in cotton stuffs out here, cotton catches the grass-seeds so much less than wool."

"Here is the blacksmith's shop. No, we don't shoe our horses, only an odd one now and then if it gets anything wrong with its hoot, but we mend buggies and drays, and do the thousand and one jobs that are always wanting to be done. Just there you see the big boilers for boiling down all the waste beasts. We send the tallow away in casks, or make it into soap for station use. I forgot to show you the new cheese-press we are making in the blacksmith's shop, but it will be your especial department to look after the cheeses; so will the poultry, and I beg to hand over to you at once the key of the poultry-yard. Eggs and chickens are a very important luxury on a station."

Adjoining the bachelors' quarters is the ancient citadel, the old log hut put up by the first white men who took up this country. "See, it is all loopholed. That was in self-defence against the blacks, who were very bad in this part of the country. It is used as men's hut now, and the stockmen and other men sleep here. Yonder, just over the ridge, you can still see the dismantled roof of a little hut where the blacks bailed up four white men for several days. They had readied their last round of ammunition, when the troopers came to their rescue. Some day I will show you the graves of a shepherd, his wife and child, all speared by the blacks one night."

Now we will look in at the office, where all the station books are kept: then to the store or shop, where the men employed on the station and travellers can buy tobacco, trousers, shirts, knives, jam if they are greedy, flour if they are hungry, castor-oil and Epsom salts if they are sick. From there to the meat-house. They killed last night, and the fresh meat is all hanging covered up with bags to keep the flies off. There are tables at which the meat is salted, and a big cask in which it lies in brine until it is all eaten up, and a fresh beast is brought in, and so on and so on, until the mouths of all on a cattle station water for mutton.

From the meat-house to the stables, where there are two dark stalls for sick horses; the rest is a large shed, two sides of which are covered in with boughs, so that it is sheltered from the sun, and always dry and cool. The men have just come in from their day's work, and are taking off their saddles and washing their horses' backs with a little cold water. This is the only grooming done, but the coats of the horses are shiny and glossy like those of corn-fed horses at home. This is partly due to the fine climate, but mostly to the rich quality of grass. The saddles strike my eye at once from the large knee pads behind which the knee is sheltered. These are a great protection when galloping through scrub country. I am very much laughed at because I remark that the bits are all rusty and dirty, and want more attention. They are all snaffles: no curbs are used. Burnside, a handsome chestnut horse, is pointed out to me. His side is all seared and scarred: he rolled in one of the paddock fires and burnt himself. These fires have to be lighted when the sand-flies are bad, for they draw blood wherever they bite, and the horses are driven mad by them, and gallop round and round the paddock, unable to rest or to feed. The smoke of a wood fire drives all flies away, and when the flies are bad the horses hang round the fire all day long, and only move off to feed as the sun goes down. That well-bred little black mare is called Jael, because she killed the man who broke her in.

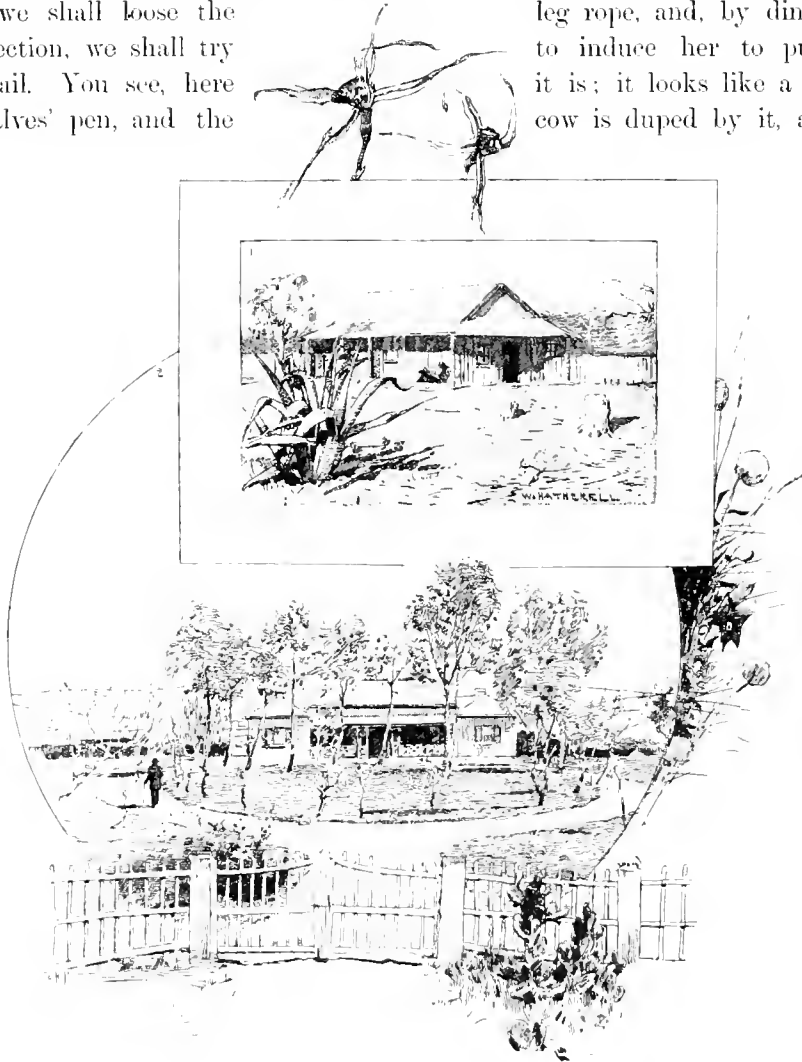
"One glimpse at the stock-yard, and then we must go in and get ready for dinner. You see there are a number of yards, and all have their uses and names, but this one where the milking is done will interest you most. We have got two new milkers in, in honour of your arrival, and, if you will get up early enough, you shall see them roped and put in the bail for the first time. One is a terror. We are making a milker of her in order to quiet her, and teach her manners. She is such a handsome creature, and her calf is a real beauty."

"What a pity to kill the calf, if it is such a beauty."

"Oh, we do not kill it: the cows are milked once a day, and the calves have the balance. The calves are shut up in that pen all night, and the cows are milked in the morning; then they are allowed to go out into the paddocks with their calves, and at night they are brought in, and the calves locked up, and the cows turned out to feed alone. See, there is that heifer I told you of: do you see how angry she is at being divided from her calf? She does not look much like one of your quiet, mournful-eyed English pets, does she? She is a wild matron of the Bush, and to-morrow morning, when she is let into the yard, she will rush up to the pen where her calf is, and when she finds herself still divided from it, she will lash herself into

a state of frenzy. Then we shall take a long rope, with a noose at one end, and throw it over her horns, another rope round her hind legs, and three or four men will pull her up to the place alongside the calf pen. It will be a tug-of-war, I can assure you, for she will kick and struggle, and bellow and foam with rage. When we get her up to the fence, we shall loose the gentle correction, we shall try into the bail. You see, here into the calves' pen, and the

leg rope, and, by dint of a little to induce her to put her head it is; it looks like a hole leading cow is duped by it, and, as soon



BACHELORS' QUARTERS.

2. A BUSH HOMESTEAD.

as she sees her calf in the pen, she rushes forward, and puts her head through this hole. In one instant the lever is raised, and she is 'bailed up,' and a prisoner at our mercy. Now we tighten the leg rope, and try to milk her, but she does not give us much milk for the first two or three days. You will laugh when you see the agility with which everyone climbs to the top rails when the word to let her go is given and the ropes are unfastened."

"Is not all this a little rough and cruel?"

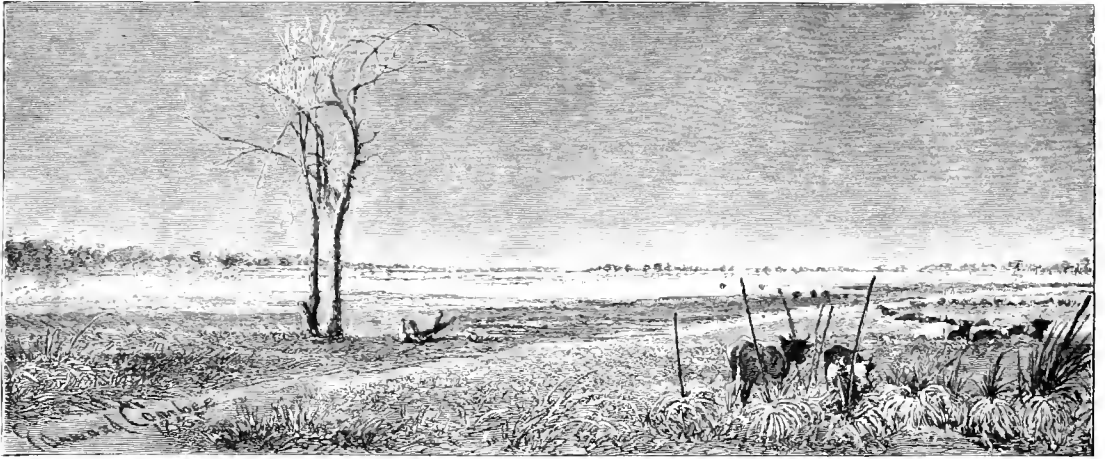
"Not a bit. In time they obey the word 'Bail up!' like lambs, and we have had milkers turned out into the Bush come back to the yard of themselves just before they were going to calve. You must see the dog-kennel to-morrow. We have fourteen kangaroo-dogs. 'Here, Nimrod, come and speak to your mistress.' See how jealous all the rest become if you caress one out of the pack. 'Down, madam!' Beautiful creatures, are they not, a cross of greyhound and staghound? You shall have some rare gallops after kangaroos and dingoes. We have not many kangaroos here; the dingoes keep them down. The dingoes kill a calf now and then, but we cattle-people look upon them with rather a friendly eye, because they keep down the marsupials. On sheep-stations they play havoc with the lambs."

"What is that little fenced-in place? Is it a well?"

"That, no; it is poor little Dicky's grave. *Magni nominis umbra*, he is under the shadow of a great name, for if he were alive now he would be heir to one of the oldest titles in England; but I am glad to say his father will not move him, or disturb the little bushman's grave. He was a fine little chap, eight years old. His horse ran him against a tree just in front here, when they were cutting out cows and calves from a mob of mixed cattle. He only lived for an hour afterwards, and he suffered so much pain that they could not even move him into the house. His last words were, 'Bury me near the stock-yard, father, for I do so love to hear the cattle.'"



CROSSING A CREEK IN WINTER.



MIRAGE EFFECTS ON THE BOGAN.

(Painted by Edward Combes, C.M.G.)

THE MIRAGE.

Over the Riverina—Monotony—A Land of Promise—Vanishing-point—Jackaroos—Parable.

IT was once my lot to ride over the dry and arid plains of the Riverina towards Jerilderie. It had been a very dry season, and all the ground was like black mould, without a single blade of grass to be seen, yet we passed large flocks of sheep seemingly in good condition. How they live is a wonder to me, until my squatter friend tells me they eat the roots and fatten on them: he also tells me that after the rain comes, this seemingly limitless expanse of dreariness will be a waving prairie of delicious green grass, breast high, with flowers blossoming as in a paradise.

Here and there we pass some clumps of she-oak and ti-tree, or some gaunt ringed gum-trees, with bare, tortuous branches, and leaves withered and curled up, which in no way serve to enliven the landscape, although they slightly break the monotony.

Onwards, mile after mile, we ride, passing now a sheep-run, with the pump-wells and water-troughs, or a team of bullocks resting by the way, while the drivers sit under the shadow of the carts and drink their tea, the bullocks lying with mouths glued to the earth, and with bloodshot glaring eyes: or, it may be, a couple of tramps ("sundowners" is the colonial term for such men), who, with their swags slung across their backs, walk slowly, and wait for night to apply for food and shelter at some hospitable station. If they came before night they might be told to move on.

As I look ahead and around, it seems that there is plenty of water everywhere in the distance. There are long lines of glittering waters, with the trees dipping into them and casting reflections. In parts the ground looks swampy, with reeds growing amidst it, and the fences standing out of it, and here and there hills rising up. Two or three miles off, at the farthest, they seem. The sky is filled with white masses of clouds, and the sun shines straight through them upon those quicksilver sheets; yet it is none too warm, for as I ride along I begin to wish I had brought an overcoat.

It is only near to us that the ground seems to be bare and grassless; away over before us we must ride into good ground—that is, if we can pick our way through those vast lakes.

“What lakes are those we are coming upon?” I inquire of my guide.

“No lakes at all,” he replies.

“But I see them quite plainly—don’t you?”

“Yes, but look behind,” he replies, with a laugh.

I look behind; and there they are, on all sides, gleaming across the barren land we have ridden through, with the same appearance of foliage and grass, the flocks of sheep standing dark against the white light beyond, and hills rising out of what I knew were flat plains.

“The mirage!” I cry out in astonishment.

“Yes,” he answered, grimly; “we see them every day, and don’t notice them unless our attention is directed to them by a new elum like you; and at nights, as you will see, where they now gleam white, they glow on all sides like lakes of flame. See that nearest patch? If you watch it closely, you will see it gradually vanish while we ride into it.”

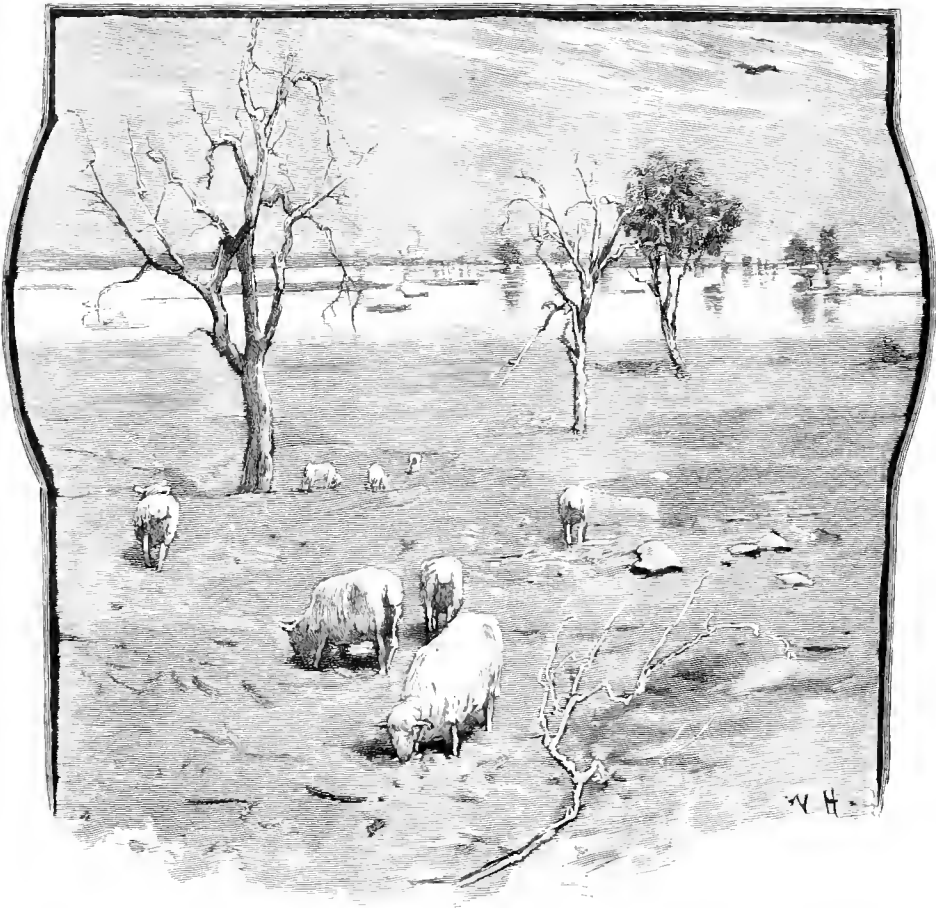
I look steadily upon the nearest line of glistening water. It crosses the base of a rounded hillock, and some sheep are standing between it and us, breaking up the straight line. As I watch and ride nearer, it gradually grows softer and more mist-like, the hill becomes smaller, until, when we are about a quarter of a mile from it, the hillock has dwindled down to a flat plain, and the water gone out of sight like a puff of steam; and so on beyond us spread sun-lighted lakes, and as we near them they drift out, leaving more still beyond, and only a dead, black, earthy desert under our horses’ hoofs—a desert dotted with the glaring white skeletons of sheep and bullocks. As they die, so they lie, devoured by the dingoes and vultures, after which the bones are polished clean and white by the vast hordes of ants that swarm everywhere.

We pass dried-up beds of streams, where in winter roll along great rivers; deserted huts of selectors, who come at times and take possession of squatters’ grounds, roughing it and fighting with the sheep-owners, till their three years’ term gives them the right to sell out, when they come to terms with the men they have been annoying, and make the most they can out of it. Government permits men to do this, and the squatters generally have to give in and purchase the ground at the selectors’ own price, to save annoyance in future. These, of course, are only sham selectors, who take up the ground to make what money they can out of it, and there is nothing for it but to yield, as the squatter is only permitted to purchase direct from Government a certain quantity of acres, although he may buy, in this way, by degrees, and with much vexation, the land he at present only leases.

Two young men on horseback join us here: they are sons of English gentlemen, come out to get colonial experience and learn sheep-farming: “Jackaroos” they are called by the station hands, an adaptation of the nickname “Johnny Raw,” and they are about as much liked as midshipmen aboard a sailing vessel. They board with the

squatters sometimes, dress in the evenings, and dine with the family, but by day have to don old clothes and felt hats, and do all the dirty and hard work—riding over the stations, looking after the sheep, drawing water, and making themselves generally useful. Doubtless they acquire experience, but they have to work for it, and to rough it.

Cheerful boys they both are. They have been in the saddle since daybreak,



ANOTHER MIRAGE EFFECT.

and they look as if they liked it—which they vow they do—better than the West End clubs, the drawing-rooms, and the aimless life of younger sons in Old England.

The sheep are lambing just now, and the Jackaroos have to be doubly attentive to their duties. As we draw close to the sheep-troughs, one of them dismounts to fill the trough, while we wait and look round.

Near at hand some sheep are grubbing amidst the loose loam for roots. Over by itself stands a mother watching by the side of her new-born lamb. We have startled her, for she looks towards us with upturned face and open mouth, a little

defiant, yet with more of pathos in her expression. By her side lies, as if dead, her tiny lamb, and behind her looms the white skeleton of a gigantic bullock : while away in the distance are those tantalising sheets of gleaming water, with their fringes of trees, and reeds, and soft reflections. The lamb is not dead, and maternal instinct tells the mother to wait and watch for the returning life, and, if need be, ward off the rapacious vulture ; but as she stands, with death behind her, and seeming death by her side, and illusion in the distance, I cannot think on the green spring or the dawning life which is to come ; I can only think upon what I see, the black desolation of that arid land, and the misery that is upon her in the midst of that false and smiling mirage.

END OF VOL. II.



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